

The return
of hot pants

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WHO WILL BE THE NEXT STAR?

While old guys dominate the gallery, great young artists are being left to languish in obscurity. That's a shame, because art hunter Wu Jin says artists who don't make it big in their 20s miss out on their chance to create truly great works in their 30s and 40s - the years of an artist's prime.

Wu is investing heavily in new artists with big potential and pushing a lucky few into the spotlight. But is profit the right mindset for painting?

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New places to
do lunch this spring



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Brain exercises key
to Jews' success



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Turn to Page One

Singapore's top book-seller spent 15 years learning how to win in Beijing's book market: the wait was worth it.



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Get ready to burn rubber

With street races banned, thrill-seekers are rediscovering kart racing.

Gov bumps benchmark interest rates to rein in CPI

The People's Bank of China, the central bank, announced Tuesday it would raise the benchmark one-year borrowing and lending interest rates by 25 points beginning Wednesday.

This was the second increase in benchmark interest rates this year and the fourth since the start of 2010.

After the increases, the one-year deposit interest rate will climb to 3.25 percent while the one-year loan interest rate will reach 6.31 percent.

Analysts said the move was a sign of the government's ongoing effort to ease stubborn consumer price rises. However, the sudden decision might mean the March consumer price increase exceeded the government's forecast.

The consumer price index (CPI), a major gauge of inflation, jumped 4.9 percent in February from one year earlier, exceeding the government's full-year target of 4 percent.

Across the country, price pressures are mounting.

Food prices, which account for one-third of the goods used to calculate CPI, surged 11 percent year on year in February.

"It's widely expected that March data will show the CPI has hit a new high. The interest rate rise is the central bank's advanced response to rising inflation pressures," said Liu Yuhui, an economist at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, a government think tank.

Rising oil and commodity prices on the global market will continue to push prices higher throughout the year, said Lu Zhengwei, chief economist of the Industrial Bank.

Lu said he expected the country's CPI growth to reach a new high of 5.2 percent in March, the fastest pace since July 2008. He said he anticipated two or



Analysts say the government's sudden decision might mean the March consumer price increase exceeded forecasts.

CFP Photo

three more benchmark interest rate hikes during the remaining months of 2011.

"The timing of the increase, during a holiday and before the announcement of economic data, will help to minimize impact in the markets," said Han Fuling, a researcher at the Beijing-based Central University of Finance and Economics.

The Shanghai and Shenzhen bourses were closed between April 3 and 5 for the Tomb-Sweeping Festival.

The National Bureau of Statistics is scheduled to release the

March economic data, including the CPI, industrial production and fixed asset investments, on April 15.

The government prioritized price stability in this year's work report and stepped up efforts to bring inflation under control.

The recent rapid price increases conflict with government policies. Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao compared inflation to a tiger: "Once it gets free, it's difficult to put it back into the cage," he told reporters last month.

To mop up the excessive liquidity that fuels inflation, the central bank has raised the

reserve requirement ratio for commercial banks nine times since the beginning of last year.

The value of new loans issued by Chinese banks in February fell to 535.6 billion yuan from January's 1.04 trillion yuan.

In addition to monetary tools, the government boosted production, lowered transportation fees for some farm produce and worked to investigate and punish price speculation and hoarding.

Analysts said China's incessant interest rate hikes and the government's policies to cool home price growth would work

together to discourage property speculation.

"There is no sign the government will relent in its property regulation campaign, leaving real estate developers no other choice but turning to discount promotions," said Changjiang Securities analyst Su Xuejing.

Su said the measures would not only discourage property speculators, but also home-buyers who want to improve their living standards, leading to a sharp fall in property turnovers in some large cities.

(Xinhua)

NGO registration may ease in 2011



Volunteers from China-Dolls educate the public about osteogenesis imperfect.

CFP Photo

By Zhang Dongya

China-Dolls, a care and support association for people with the genetic disorder osteogenesis imperfect (OI), was registered as a legal NGO last week.

The NGO spent its last three years searching for a supervisory unit, a step required of all registered NGOs. Last month, the Beijing Municipal Bureau of Civil Affairs found a willing supervisor: the China Social Welfare Education Foundation.

During that time in legal limbo, the NGO raised more than 2 million yuan to aid some 200 people with OI. But with half its funds coming from individual donors, the association faces unstable funding.

Legal classification as an NGO will enable the group to solicit donations from enterprises and the government.

As of the end of 2010, China had more than 440,000 registered NGOs, according to local government figures. But more than twice that number have failed to find the supervisory unit needed to complete registration.

Relaxed policy

The law allows for three types of organizations to register as NGOs with the Beijing Municipal Bureau of Civil Affairs: social organizations, foundations and pri-

vately-run non-enterprise units.

Most of the capital's registered NGOs are social organizations.

Earlier this year, the local bureau of civil affairs announced that associations in the fields of business, charity, welfare and social services would be able to directly register with the city's related civil affairs departments.

Many hailed the decision as "a big step" in lowering the barriers to NGO registration.

Last year, the Beijing Municipal Bureau of Civil Affairs developed a "one-stop" service for registration to simplify procedures. The system helped expedite the process of finding a supervisory group for social organizations such as public welfare groups and charities.

More than 20 associations registered as legal NGOs using the bureau's procedures.

The governor also tested a "free-of-supervisory-unit model" in Zhongguancun Industrial Park last year, allowing all social organizations in the area to register free of charge.

Dongcheng District established its own service center for small- and mid-sized charitable associations to ease their registration process.

Policy outlook

Many take the policy change as a sign

that NGOs may soon be exempt from supervisory units.

Responding to misreading, the management office of Beijing social groups said the management system has not changed and all registered social organizations remain under the management of their supervisory units.

The trial is only intended to ease legal registration procedures.

The local department of civil affairs said it will find supervisory units for social groups seeking to register as NGOs, and that in certain cases it may act as the direct supervisor for charitable and welfare groups.

Present regulations, which took effect in 2004, as well as regulations on private non-enterprise units dating back to 1998, are considered far behind the times.

The local bureau of civil affairs said revisions to both were supposed to be reviewed by the State Council last year. The bureau said the revision would loosen the requirements for supervisory bodies, though whether this revision is passed into law would be up to the State Council.

According to a report by *Caijing Magazine*, new regulations regarding NGO foundation are expected to be issued during 2011.

HK eager to keep out expecting mothers

By Han Manman

Hong Kong authorities are examining their options to combat an endless flow of pregnant tourists from the mainland.

The Hong Kong Hospital Authority and Department of Health recently revealed that mainland mothers accounted for approximately 40,000 births in Hong Kong during 2010; nearly half of the island's 88,000 total.

The numbers represent a massive increase from the "few hundred" births of 2004 and 2005. The island's healthcare officials are projecting 92,000 births by mainland mothers this year, and another 100,000 to follow in 2012.

"It's a situation that must be resolved quickly before community services are affected," said York Chow, secretary for food and health under the Hong Kong government.

He said his bureau is studying ways to tackle the issue, including placing limits on the number of pregnant non-resident mainland women allowed to access local hospitals and urging local private hospitals to limit the number of pregnant mainland women they treat.

The measures would be the second of the kind placed on mainland mothers since 2007.

At that time, the Hong Kong local government introduced legislation that prohibited women past their 28th week of pregnancy from entering the city without providing proof of a booking at a local hospital.

The prohibitions and punishments, initially successful, have eroded in the face of the mainland's recent economic success.

The demand has given birth to many related business, such as



Service agencies provide one-stop solutions for mothers looking to deliver their babies in Hong Kong. IC Photo

one-stop service agencies to assist expecting mothers.

For mainlanders, there are a number of incentives for giving birth in Hong Kong.

"The biggest reason to give birth in Hong Kong is that we will be able to have a second baby," said He Li, 38, manager of a local software company.

He said both he and his wife want to have a second child, but they are prohibited from this on the mainland. The nation's family planning policy required that both parents be from single-child families if they want to have a second child.

He spent more than 100,000

yuan two years ago to have a daughter in Hong Kong.

Though the cost is 10 times higher than giving birth in Beijing, He said it was a worthwhile investment in his daughter's future.

"My daughter has a Hong Kong passport, so she will be able to enter the most prestigious educational facilities in the mainland with greater ease than her local peers," He said.

He and his wife are considering sending their daughter to Hong Kong to study when she reaches high school age so she can get used to an international atmosphere and improve her English skills.

Additionally, as a Hong Kong

passport holder, the girl is eligible for traveling to more than 130 countries without needing a visa.

While Hong Kong authorities have not announced how they plan to keep mothers out, observers are already pessimistic about their ability to resolve the problem, *First Financial Daily* reported.

Several local legislators said any attempt to ban non-resident women from the mainland from entering Hong Kong could be struck down as illegal discrimination. They also said private hospitals are likely to oppose any proposal to ban mainlanders, since pregnancy tourists are one of their largest sources of income.

US-born Jew named most influential Chinese

By Huang Daohen

American-born Sidney Shapiro was selected as one of 12 Chinese elites to receive You Bring Charm to the World, a lifetime achievement award, during the annual award ceremony last weekend at Peking University.

The translator, who was naturalized as a Chinese citizen in 1963, was selected for his dedication to the country.

Past award winners include Nobel laureate Yang Zhenning, missile expert Qian Xuesen and novelist Jin Yong.

Shapiro marks the first time the award was given to a naturalized citizen.

"I love China. My home is here and my roots are in China," said Shapiro, who has been helping people overseas learn about Chinese literature and culture for decades.

Born to Jewish parents in Brooklyn, New York in 1915, Shapiro arrived in Shanghai in 1947. He had been selected to study Chinese while serving in the US army during World War II for a planned US military landing during the Japanese occupation.

Shapiro fell in love with the country.

After leaving the army, he came to China to continue his study of Chinese language, culture and history. He was accepted as a Chinese citizen in 1963 and later became a member of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Council. Shapiro's main achievements are researching Kai-feng Jews and translating major literary works, including *Outlaws of the Marsh*, *The Family* and *Snowfield*.

Today, Shapiro is retired and lives in a courtyard near Shichahai in downtown Beijing. Every day, visitors from home and abroad come to ask him questions on every topic related to China, he said.

The ceremony's remaining 11 awards were given in five categories. Awards in art and culture went to comedian Ge You, star of the blockbuster *If You Are the One*, dancer Yang Liping and the National Ballet of China.

The Expo Shanghai Bureau, organizers of the Taopei International Flore Expo and Baron Wei, adviser to the UK Government, won the award for public welfare. World synchronized swimming champions Jiang Wenwen and Jiang Tingting and tennis player Li Na took the sports awards.

The awards, given annually since 2006, are sponsored by 14 media groups including Phoenix TV, *Beijing Youth Daily* and China News Service.

Amateur explorers strain police rescue resources

By Li Zhixin

Beijing police are receiving increasing reports of amateur mountaineering teams becoming trapped in the municipality's surrounding hills. This week, officers conducted two search and rescue operations, straining police resources.

On Monday, Beijing Police dispatched 300 officers to rescue 39 Beijing Institute of Technology students who were members of Feng-xinzi Mountaineering Society. The students got trapped on an outing to Mt. Maoer in Fangshan District. The rescue took police 13 hours using their AW-139 and A-109 helicopters.

The next day, another 17 travelers got trapped on the steep mountains of Mentougou District. Police dispatched three helicopters and 50 officers to rescue the people, who were members of an amateur mountaineering expedition called 923 Hiker. That rescue took police 21 hours to complete.

Since June 2010, police have responded to six cases of groups becoming trapped in the mountains. Police have repeatedly reminded the public – especially



Beijing police are being called for mountain rescues too often. Monday's rescue of 39 students took police 13 hours using AW-139 and A-109 helicopters. Photo provided by Beijing Youth Daily

novice climbers – to avoid exploring mountains at random.

Luo Shen, director of exploration at China's Mountaineering Association, said the scenic administration should amend its rules to prohibit inexperienced climbers from exploring areas where the terrain is complex and steep.

"To dispatch such massive police strength so frequently because of

trapped amateurs strains our social resources," said Liu Jianli, a lawyer of Beijing Shuanli Law Office.

On the two rescue actions, Beijing Police flew a total of seven runs with the choppers, which cost nearly 3,000 yuan per hour to operate.

He said the amateur explorers did not appreciate the social cost of their actions and the danger in which they put their own lives.

"As responsible adults, they should recognize that climbing wild mountains is dangerous. If they become entangled while exploring away from the established path, it's not right for them to expect society to pick up the bill for their rescue," he said.

"They should be punished financially so they learn what these 'adventures' cost the rest of us," he said.

Spend or save?

Consumers' reluctance to spend worries world

By Huang Daohen

China makes; the world takes.

For decades, the world's factory has provided endless goods for the rest of the world to buy. But now, if anyone should be scrambling to the mall for a shopping spree, it is the Chinese.

The world has been counting on Chinese consumers to deliver growth, especially after the global financial crisis.

Traditional economic theory postulates that personal income increases make families more willing to spend. In China, it appears the opposite is true. The latest figures show that consumer confidence fell to its lowest since 2009 – the country's consumers are unshakably reluctant to part with their hard-earned cash.



Senior shoppers face difficult shopping decisions these days. China's CPI topped the government's 4 percent target for 2011. CFP Photo

Rural consumers awaken

In remote Fenghuang County, Hunan Province, Xiang Wengui heads to town for a shopping fair in hopes of bringing home some cheap goods.

Following a stroll around the temporary market, he decides to "splurge" on a 120-yuan electric cooker from a home appliance shop.

The 55-year-old farmer grins and seems satisfied with his new purchase. "Electricity is cheap, and using an electric cooker will be cheaper than sticking with our gas stove," he says.

"I already have an LCD TV at home, and hope to pick up an automatic washing machine and a fridge [later this year]," Xiang says.

Standing by his side is Ren Qing, 35, the temporary shop's owner.

Since he has a television, a washing machine, a fridge and a computer, Ren's purchase plans tend toward the exotic: "If there is one thing I dream of owning, it is Buddhist religious art," he says.

Ren gestures around his shop of televisions and fridges. His 3-year-old daughter plays in the doorway. "Life here is difficult – I can only earn enough money to feed the family," he says.

This year's business is getting better after a government policy that offers subsidies to farmers who want to purchase electronic appliances. Ren says local farmers are starting to spend more "for a more comfortable life."

Ren's words should be music to Timothy Geithner's ears.

Geithner, the US Treasury Secretary, pins all hopes for salvaging his country's failing economy on the spending power of hundreds of millions of rural farmers like Xiang and Ren.

If Chinese factories produce more for domestic market and export, it will

help narrow the now infamous trade imbalance.

Europeans feel the same way as they look to China's nouveau riche and their endless appetite for luxury goods.

Falling consumer confidence

Yet the rural consumption boom is deceptive.

Zhang Dewang is a 37-year-old migrant worker in Beijing. Originally from rural Anhui Province, he came to the capital with his wife in 2008, leaving behind their son, 7, and daughter, 5.

Zhang first worked on a construction site and later began selling barbecued meat near the Sanlitun area. "[The construction job] was really tough and I quit. I hope I can make more money by selling roasted meat, but it's turned out this job isn't so easy either," he says.

Beijing nights remain chilly this month. It's Tuesday night and Zhang is working late. Tonight his skewers are selling for between 1 and 5 yuan.

If he is lucky, the low-level municipal administrators – the chengguan – won't show up to raid his supplies or make off with his grill. On most nights he can earn 300 yuan.

Zhang shares an apartment with two other migrants and has not set foot in a restaurant since he came to Beijing.

Asked whether he would go to a cinema or shop, Zhang looks to his wife and says, "We usually don't go to places where you have to pay."

Granted, now not all 200 million of the country's migrant workers struggle like Zhang, but rising inflation has migrants

and other residents closing their purses.

The runaway consumer price index of the past several months has made the cover of virtually every domestic newspaper.

Despite tough times, some are managing to make ends meet.

Koukouzu, loosely translated as "the stingy group," is one symptom of the times. The group members, mostly born in the 1980s, give practical advice on how to save money by reusing wash water to flush the toilet, eating at work and using group purchases when possible.

"Knowing how to save is the best way to battle inflation, and at a time of

global economic uncertainty," says Li Lin, 27, a Koukouzu member.

Analysts say the popularity of saving shows a decrease in consumer confidence. The latest report from the National Bureau of Statistics seems to confirm this.

This year's consumer confidence index (CCI) slipped to 100 this year, from 104 in the previous quarter – the lowest recorded values since 2009, the bureau says.

Only 30 percent of consumers polled by the bureau say now is a good time to spend on necessities, down 20 percent from 2010.

The low CCI has slammed the retail sector. Data from the Ministry of Com-

merce shows a deep slump in retail sales during the first quarter of 2011.

In January and February, retail sales growth fell to 11.6 percent from last December's robust 20 percent.

An article published in the Hong Kong-based *South China Morning Post* attributes this to consumers failing to live up to the world's expectations.

Growth model

The sad truth is that Chinese consumers are spending.

They are spending more than ever on cars and home applications. Last year, the country overtook the US as the largest auto market and this year it became the world's second biggest market for luxury goods.

But as incomes grow, so does the desire to save, said Wen Yi, a local lawyer and associate researcher at Renmin University of China.

Chinese shoppers rarely throw caution to the wind and spend themselves into wild debt. The country's social safety nets are thin, and most people pay for their health care out of pocket, Wen said. While the government is attempting to reinforce the pension system, this will mainly support urban workers.

Besides, old habits die hard.

"It is true that people don't really need to save as much nowadays, but it's a habit," Wen says.

Wen said the answer may be a government campaign to change both shoppers' attitudes and the nation's growth model.

China has enjoyed decades of double-digit economic growth by favoring investment and export over domestic consumption. "But domestic consumption will be the story of the next decade, and because we are talking about a fifth of mankind, it will have a huge impact on global business," Wen said.

"Domestic consumption will be the story of the next decade, and because we are talking about a fifth of mankind, it will have a huge impact on global business."

The next paper giant?

China poised to overtake US as biggest publisher of scientific papers

In an analysis of global trends in science, the UK's Royal Society predicts that China can overtake the US as the world's dominant publisher of scientific research by 2013, the *Guardian* reported last Monday.

The news soon spread to other websites. Some people think this is another sign of China's rise. However, does the rapid digital growth of scientific papers really have practical significance?

The Royal Society said China was now second only to the US in terms of its share of the world's scientific research papers written in English. The UK has been pushed into third place, with Germany, Japan, France and Canada following behind.

The report highlighted the increasing challenge to the traditional superpowers of science from the world's emerging economies and also identified emerging talent in countries not traditionally associated with a strong science base, including Iran, Tunisia and Turkey.

"The scientific world is changing and new players are fast appearing. Beyond the emergence of China, we see the rise of Southeast Asian, Middle Eastern, North African and other nations," said Chris Llewellyn Smith, director of energy research at Oxford University and chair of the Royal Society's study.

"The increase in scientific research and collaboration, which can help us find solutions to the global challenges we now face, is very welcome," Smith said. "However, no historically dominant nation can afford to rest on its laurels if it wants to retain the competitive economic advantage that a scientific leader brings."

In the report, the Royal Society said that science around the world was in good health, with increases in funding and personnel in recent years. Between 2002 and 2007, global spending on research and development rose from \$790 billion (5.17 trillion yuan) to \$1.145 trillion, and the number of researchers increased from 5.7 million to 7.1 million.

To compare the output of different countries, the Royal Society's report collated information on research papers published from two time periods, 1993-2003 and 2004-2008. It counted research papers that had an abstract in English and where the work had been peer reviewed.

In both periods, the US dominated the world's science, but its share of publications dropped from 26 percent to 21 percent. China's share rose from 4.4 percent to 10.2 percent. The UK's share declined from 7.1 percent to 6.5 percent of the world's papers.

Projecting beyond 2011, the Royal Society said the landscape would change "dramatically." "China has already overtaken the UK as the second leading producer of research publications, but some time before 2020 it is expected to surpass the US," according to the Royal Society report. This could happen as soon as 2013.

China's rise is the most impressive, but Brazil, India and South Korea are following fast behind and are set to surpass the output of France and Japan by the start of the next decade.

As it grows its research base, Smith said China could end up leading the world in subjects such as nanotechnology. "The fact is they've poured money into nanotechnology and that's an area where they are recruiting people back from around the world with very attractive laboratories – that's my feeling."

(Agencies)



A student from Beijing Normal University accepts an award for her outstanding Master's thesis.

Xu Ying/CFP Photo

Expert

The output of paper signifies less than one might think

By Li Zhixin

The number of scientific research papers is an important quantitative index of a country's scientific and technological development, and China indeed has the world's second largest output of papers. This makes sense, since China has lots of scientific personnel.

However, the growing number of research publications in China does not necessarily mean a rise in quality. According to the UK Royal Society's report, the citation ranking – a key indicator of publication quality – showed that the quality of China's scientific papers is far lower than would be expected given the nation's investment in science or publication output.

Citations of Chinese papers represent only 3.7 percent of worldwide citations, suggesting

China has a long way to go before its scientists are taken seriously by the international scientific community.

Patent awards – indicating useful inventions and meant to protect the property rights of inventors – are still dominated by inventors in the US, Europe and Japan. US patents awarded to Asians is on the rise, driven by activity in Taiwan and South Korea, but the number of Chinese people receiving patents remains modest.

On the other hand, don't overlook these basic factors behind China's low citation ranking: the appraisal system between China and Europe and the US varies, meaning some brilliant Chinese papers are ignored.

What's more, language may also have something to

do with publication quality. With English being the lingua franca of scientific research and international commerce, China's next step will be to improve its spoken and written English standards as well as translating proficiency.

A comprehensive index ranking the proficiency of non-native English speakers from 2007 to 2009 showed that Asia's performance was significantly lower than expected. English proficiency levels ranged from high in Malaysia to low in China, and very low in Vietnam and Indonesia. Poorly written publications may lead to China's lower citations and a reduced impact of its works.

—Xiao Huanrong, professor at International Communication College of Communication University of China

Profiting from piracy: Robin Li's problem is China's problem

Baidu's billionaire co-founder and CEO Robin Li, the richest man in China with \$9.4 billion (61.5 billion yuan), has faced a swell of criticism that he built his fortune in part by allowing others to steal from the poor.

In a recent case, Chinese authors sued Baidu as their works have been pirated en masse via user uploads to its Baidu Wenku (Library) service.

Baidu says it is working to address the writers' concerns, auditing its library for pirated books with the intent of taking them all off the site. Li told a recent forum in Shenzhen that if the problems with Baidu Wenku can't be fixed, he'll shut it down.

But the reason Li and Baidu are in this public relations mess now is because, for years, they behaved like many Chinese businesses and consumers: they exhibited a casual disregard for copyrights.

Li's problem, in other words, is China's problem, inherited from a time when its consumer market and economic power were small and weak, when there were virtually no significant Chinese brands and no Chinese billionaires.

Times have changed, and it is long past time for Chinese companies, consumer culture and official attitudes to change. Some companies are beginning to do their part. Youku, at the behest of government regulators, has finally gone a long way to cleansing the site of pirated movies and television shows.

Li's misfortune to date is that his enemies know how to write. Han Han, the country's most popular blogger, wrote two blog posts recently accusing Baidu and Li of arrogantly taking money out of writers' pockets, under the headlines "Shame on Baidu" and "A Letter to Robin Li."

Baidu came around at exactly the right time, because only in this day and age can you violate the rights of authors, composers and filmmakers at will, Han said.

Han's letter to Li is no more kind, but in it he offers Li and Baidu a chance at something more than redemption. "Baidu Wenku could very well become the basis for the wealth of Chinese authors, and not the grave in which they are buried," he said.

Chinese Internet entrepreneurs tolerated or enabled piracy for years while their companies grew and made a fortune; now they need to be role models, leading the way from an economy that rewards piracy to an economy that rewards originality.

(Agencies)

Country halts all investments in Libya



The government has evacuated 36,000 workers from Libya.

Lin Lu/CFP Photo

China will not make new investments in Libya until the country's situation stabilizes, an official with the Commerce Ministry told Xinhua.

"Before the situation becomes clear, exchanges between China and Libya in terms of trade, construction contracts and investment will be seriously affected. I am afraid that China is unlikely to make any new investments there soon," the official said.

The country's investment in Libya is mainly in the energy and construction sectors. Some Chinese project contractors, including China Gezhouba Corp as well as China Railway Construction and Metallurgical, have projects in Libya.

Government figures released last Thursday showed that 35,860 Chinese have left Libya, abandoning construction materials, machines, vehicles and projects valued at billions of dollars.

The Ministry of Commerce said 75 Chinese enterprises had investments in Libya, where they operated 50 joint projects and employed more than 36,000 workers. Thirteen of the firms were state-owned.

In the first week after protests against Colonel Muammar Gaddafi erupted February 16, 27 Chinese construction sites and camps were attacked and looted, the min-

istry said in a statement on February 24.

"Working alongside the Ministry of Commerce, we are busily helping enterprises calculate losses and have begun to organize compensation claims and loss recovery," Zhang Xiang, a spokeswoman of the China International Contractors Association (CICA), said.

"We don't have an exact number at the moment, since those companies are still focusing on evacuating personnel and on their resettlement in China," she added.

The China State Construction Engineering Corporation said in a statement Tuesday that its 20,000 residential construction projects in Libya, worth 17.6 billion yuan, were threatened.

The company said that only half of the projects had been finished, and the firm was forced to stop due to the country's internal fighting.

Media reports suggested that, before the evacuation, many Chinese companies ordered their personnel to back up important files and make detailed lists of equipment for future compensation claims.

The ministry's figures showed that the country's outbound foreign direct investment in the non-financial sector hit \$59 billion (386 billion yuan) last year, up 36

percent year-on-year.

The *National Business Daily* reported that the combined Chinese contracts signed last year in Libya were worth \$1.8 billion (11.8 billion yuan).

Cui Shoujun, director of the International Energy Research Center at Renmin University of China, told the *South China Morning Post* last week that many of the country's energy projects in Africa were based on bilateral ties rather than business contracts.

"This sort of relationship makes Chinese businesses there very vulnerable in case of upheaval," Cui was quoted as saying.

Lin Guijun, a professor at the University of International Business and Economics, told the *Global Times* that the government should offer better guidance for Chinese companies to expand their businesses overseas to avoid suffering huge losses in conditions similar to the Libyan unrest.

"The authorities should thoroughly evaluate the business environment in those countries regularly," Lin said, adding that there is a lot of work to do in helping those companies get compensated for losses.

(Agencies)

Update

China Construction Bank, Bank of China say no actual losses

The unrest in Libya has cost Chinese companies dearly beyond the rising price of oil. But China Construction Bank (CCB) and Bank of China said Wednesday their Libyan businesses haven't incurred any actual losses and that the risks amid the turmoil in the country are controllable.

The comments by two of the country's Big Four state-run lenders came after the Commerce Ministry said last week two Libyan banks had applied to CCB, Bank of China and policy lender Export-Import Bank of China for an extension on 11 letters of guarantee valued around \$500 million.

The policy lender, which received six requests to extend letters of guarantee totaling \$225 million according to the ministry, declined to comment Wednesday.

CCB, which received a request for an extension of a letter of guarantee totaling \$32 million, said in a statement on its website its main business in Libya involves advanced payments for contracted projects and that it had made risk assessments before extending the documents.

"Before the bank engaged in the guarantee business, it carried out careful assessments of clients and risks and took some measures to mitigate potential risks. Currently, the bank hasn't incurred any actual losses in the relevant business and the risks are controllable," it said.

Bank of China, which received four requests for extensions on such contracts totaling \$230 million, made similar remarks in an emailed statement to Dow Jones Newswires.

"We are paying close attention to the potential risks from the recent Libyan turmoil, and have taken the necessary measures to fend off the risks," Bank of China said, without elaborating.

The 11 letters of guarantee involved seven Chinese companies, according to the commerce ministry, but it didn't give their names.

(Agencies)

IKEA bans proxy buyers in Beijing, Shanghai

By Zhao Hongyi

Swedish furniture designer and retailer IKEA opened its first China store 15 years ago in Shanghai. Since then, the chain has expanded to seven other mainland locations, including Beijing, Guangzhou, Chengdu, Shenzhen, Nanjing, Dalian and Shenyang.

But for the bulk of the country, IKEA's products remain inaccessible due to aggressive delivery fees tacked onto purchases made through the company's official store.

IKEA is known in second-tier cities and the countryside for selling modern furniture designs at low prices.

To meet demand for IKEA products, a second industry of proxy buyers has developed. The agents present IKEA products at their online stores and showrooms and

provide purchasing, delivery and assembly at a fraction of IKEA's fee.

This week, the retailer began banning these bulk purchasers from its outlets in Beijing and Shanghai to "protect end buyers."

"The number of these buyers is very limited, and we give them warnings the first few times we see them," Wang Zhilong, a clerk, said of the repeat faces.

Proxy agents have responded with anger.

"I started my business of reselling goods from IKEA Beijing 10 years ago. It's crazy that we're being stopped not by the authorities, but by IKEA's own discriminatory practices," said Wang Yajun, an agent running an IKEA shop.

Official IKEA delivery costs 60-80 yuan per cubic meter, depending on the

size and shape of the product, the distance the recipient is from an IKEA store and the floor the home is on. Most precuts cost between 300 and 500 yuan to deliver, making proxy buyers a popular alternative.

The IKEA proxy purchasing industry has grown so big that an estimated several billion yuan pass through the hands of the buyers each year.

IKEA said it plans to open between eight and 10 malls in second-tier cities during the next five years.

"IKEA, like many foreign multinational corporations, has faced many unexpected challenges and lost business opportunities in operating on the mainland," said Song Ligu, a professor of business at Beijing Technology and Business University.

Song said IKEA's best option is to lower its delivery fees to make the official IKEA store more competitive with the proxy agents.

However, he also said the proxy agents have unrealistic expectations about the longevity of their industry. Logistics is developing rapidly in China, and as the country becomes more connected, the price of official delivery services is bound to fall.

Many proxy sellers are beginning to recognize their industry is unlikely to survive in the long term.

"More and more consumers who like IKEA products own private vehicles," Wang Yajun said. "It's making it very difficult for us to attract new customers who have the money needed to buy these goods."

Unaffordable graveyard

By Chu Meng

A luxurious grave at the Ease and Happiness graveyard in Xiamen, Fujian Province, has been priced at 8 million yuan for 20 years of maintenance, Xinhua News Agency reported Monday.

Such a high price for a grave may be startling, but the practice of purchasing grave upkeep by 20-year intervals is common.

Because land in China is technically all state-owned, people who "buy" a grave or plot of land around the grave are actually purchasing the 20-year upkeep fee. All graveyards, theoretically, are also state-owned.

According to the state-owned Graveyard Management Regulation issued by the Ministry of Civil Affairs in 1992, graveyards are leased by the State and have a maximum duration of 50 or 70 years depending on the condition of the land at the gravesite. The duration is similar to land leases for the real estate industry. The leases can be renewed upon expiration.

But as many of these graves near the end of their original 20-year contracts, many people are being priced out of renewals. Prices have risen from 2,000 yuan per square meter in the 1990s to 35,000 yuan today on average.

Regulators originally proposed the 20-year upkeep fee system to prevent graveyards administrators from collecting huge advance payments.

But considering the soaring prices, disputes are arising over whether these fees should be reduced.



Tomb-sweeping Festival is a time for mourning the deceased, but soaring graveyard maintenance fees have angered many people. IC Photo

Comment

High charges reasonable

The 20-year maintenance fee is common in many other countries such as the UK, Denmark, Finland, Switzerland and Germany. The dispute, however, lies in the prices. In Denmark, for instance, the average cost for 20 years of maintenance is only about 4,000 yuan.

The situation in China is different because there is less supply. We should consider the large population, and how scarce it is to find open land.

Land used for graveyards is also nonrenewable. The government should advocate more economical use of land and encourage other forms of burial, such as ocean burial.

The comparatively high prices are necessary.

— Peng XueFang, researcher from the Institute of Anthropology, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences

Public graveyard should be not-for-profit

Graveyards are state-owned. Lands are leased from the country. Why are they not not-for-profit organizations then? How come they adopt market-oriented operations and make a huge sum of money out of the average citizen?

Thirty-four thousand yuan for a standard one-square-meter grave in Beijing is about the same as the price for a house within Forth Ring Road.

But while the price of a house comes with 70 years of property rights, the grave price is only for 20 years of management.

The government should treat graveyards as a social welfare issue and keep prices in check.

— Chen Yang, 35, a Beijing resident

Lack of regulations

Though the ministry clarified that after 20 years the grave will not be "taken back" from the citizen, if the management fees are not renewed, the grave will be regarded as "ownerless" according to regulations set forth in 1992. However, there are no specifications about what happens to "ownerless" graves. Would someone demolish it and resell it to another family?

And since in the original laws and regulations there is no mention of pricing, state-owned graveyards have come up with the prices for renewal. And since demand exceeds supply, there's no reason to believe the prices won't keep soaring.

I feel so frustrated about the leasing term. It is ridiculous that you have to pay money again and again just to let your deceased relatives rest in peace.

— Mo Jun, 59, retired Peking University professor

World's priciest dog fetches controversy

By Huang Daohen

China's rich have made global headlines again, this time with a dog. Last month, a coal baron from Shanxi Province paid 10 million yuan for an 11-month-old Tibetan mastiff in London.

The sale made the three-foot tall and 180-pound red mastiff the most expensive dog ever sold. While details of the deal were kept confidential, the dog's breeder, Lu Liang, told the London-based *Telegraph* that the buyer was a multimillionaire coal magnate from central China.

"When I started in this business 10 years ago, I never thought we would see such a price," Lu was quoted as saying.

The mastiff, named Hong Dong, or Big Splash, by the buyer, has been raised on a diet of beef, chicken, abalone and sea cucumber.

Keeping a Tibetan mastiff has become a popular status symbol among the country's growing nouveau riche.

Lu said over the past several years, the price for Tibetan mastiffs has been driven from a few hundred dollars to hundreds of thousands.

Many questions the country's rich are choosing to spend their wealth.

Comment

Donate to charities

This guy should spare some money for charities. A wealthy and noble person should always know how to give away and help others. There are people starving in big cities. Bill Gates and Warren Buffet, whose money came largely from Americans, both give to charities and have funded several US-based foundations along with charities overseas.

— John Dinsmore, business consultant

Higher taxes needed

This is why the wealthy need higher taxes. When they're allowed to keep more money, this is how they choose to spend it.

— Jessica, lawyer

Don't judge others

When I first heard this news, I got pissed off. My first reaction was, why doesn't this selfish man help the tsunami

victims? But it is funny when people get mad at others who have money to spend. Is it not his money and his right to do what he thinks fit? While I agree that it is a ridiculous amount of money to spend on a dog, it's his money. He can do whatever he likes.

— Janine Lu, secretary

All about investment

This isn't about the dog. These businessmen invest in anything of value, like buying homes and anything of value that can generate more wealth through collateral gain. It is sad that pets are considered commodities and status symbols. I hope this will change in the future.

— Cindy Wu, schoolteacher

Help stray animals

The real tragedy here is all the loving non-purebreds that are wasting away in shelters before being euthanized. The



This red Tibetan mastiff is the most expensive dog in the world.

Photo provided by *Telegraph*

dog is beautiful, but no one should pay that kind of money for one. That money could have helped thousands of needy dogs and perhaps pay to have many spayed to prevent more unwanted ones. If

somebody has that kind of money to blow, they should think about how they can use their abundant resources to help those truly in need.

— James Wolfer, research director

From bad student to Genoese record holder

Israeli master reveals secret of 'super memory'

By Han Manman

For most of us, photographic memory almost seems like a superpower. But Eran Katz will tell you he is a man of mortal flesh born with no superhuman abilities.

He just trained himself to remember things extraordinarily well.

The Israeli man with the large forehead and cunning eyes holds a World Guinness Record for reciting 500 numbers forward and backward after hearing them just once.

He is also an international memory and "brain trainer" and bestselling author.

Last week, Katz embarked on his first China tour to talk about his exceptional memory skills and share his theories about the notion of the "smart Jew" – why, for instance, Jews only constitute a quarter of 1 percent of the world's population yet constitute 40 percent of Nobel Prize winners.

A memory show

Katz began the interview in the Israeli embassy by asking interviewers to speak 40 random numbers. After thinking for a few seconds with his eyes closed, he recited off all the numbers in the correct order they were given.

Then he recited them backwards.

"I made up a story of a sheep jumping through the inside of a white boat," Katz said, explaining what he was thinking when he closed his eyes.

He explained that he has a knack for turning numbers into words and weaving them into imaginative stories, making it easy to recall the component numerals.

Katz, 45, said he is constantly hearing people say that they have very poor memory and they cannot even remember their parents' cell phone numbers. Many also claim their memory has weakened as they've aged.

However, Katz said memory isn't an innate ability. "It's a skill that can be trained, developed and fine-tuned."

"People forget not because they get old and senile – it is more likely that they did not use and train their brains enough to retain all the information," he said.

Secrets of super memory

Katz was born in a Jewish family and, he claims, without the gift for memory.

But his life changed when he was in high school, where he began taking an interest in how memory works and made this his hobby.

"At that time, I was a bad student and I was looking for some shortcuts to help me succeed in the exams without working too hard," Katz said.

He was inspired one day and used his imagination to remember schoolwork. He associated his work with things he was familiar with.

For the first time, he was breezing through his exams. He began to realize that practicing those skills could change his life.

Katz began training himself.

The more he practiced, the more he could remember. But good memory also brought him trouble. Some professors thought he was cheating on his exams, as they couldn't believe anyone could ace their tests.

"There are various ways to train your memory: you need to find the way that fits you," Katz said.

"For short-term memory, the one thing that will always help me remember is to pay attention," he said, explaining that many times, people forget names or cannot remember a phone number not because they forget but because

they never registered the information to begin with.

"I'm sure if I offer you 1 billion dollars to remember a cell phone number, you will easily recite it," Katz said.

But for medium- and long-term memory, some skills are needed. Using imagination and association is key.

Katz said there is a technique called the "memory room": when preparing for a presentation, for example, take key points of things you need to remember and associate it with certain pieces of furniture in your room. Then, attach keywords to the furniture and visualize it for days. All you have to do during the presentation then is to remember what your room looks like.

Katz said many Israelis have very good memories because they have a "secret weapon" not used in other countries.

He said in some Jewish schools, students keep from falling asleep by rocking back and forth.

"It's scientifically shown that body movement generates blood flow to the brain and increases the level of concentration," Katz said, adding that he always recommends students try to remember material while walking.

"Don't read the material while walking because that isn't good for your eyesight, but try to remember and recall what you have learned while walking," he said. "It's double the amount the information you can remember in half the time."

"It's proven that the more you work on your memory and brain, the more you'll remember when you get older. What doesn't help is watching TV," Katz said, adding that studies have shown that as people watch TV, their brain waves are flat – as if they're dead.

Learning from Israeli spirit

For Katz, China and Israel have many similarities: both the nations were born out of ancient civilizations, and both respect their history and traditions.

But Katz said he noticed a very interesting phenomenon. Why does Israel, with its small population, boast such a high percentage of notable historic figures such as Sigmund Freud, Pablo Picasso, Warren Buffett and George Soros? Why have 40 percent of Nobel Prize winners been Jewish?

"But how many Chinese people win the prize? The number is less than 10, and most of them are Chinese not living in China," Katz said. "Why?"

"Different nations have different stereotypes, and the Jews were always stereotyped as being smart," he said. "I was

curious why that is, so I investigated it for a number of years."

Katz found that the reason was survival.

"Israel has a depressing history," he said. "Israelis have been subjected to persecution throughout their 2,000-year history. So they had to be able to think to survive."

"The Jewish people always had to think twice in advance. Especially when you are an outsider, you have to prove yourself."

Katz said Jewish people's straightforward attitudes also contributed to their success.

The reason Jewish people win Nobel Prizes? For Katz, the reason is simply because they constantly send applications to the Nobel Prize committee.

"You cannot win a Nobel Prize if you don't apply for it," Katz said, adding that the Chinese way of thinking – trying to be perfect – sometimes makes them believe they are not worthy of the prize.

"The Jewish way is: just try," Katz said.

During his China visit, Katz was invited to give speeches at some top Chinese universities such as Peking University and Tsinghua University. But Katz was disappointed with his experience because the students there were all so quiet.

"They don't argue, they don't ask questions," he said.

Katz said in Israel, students always argue with the professor, and they don't take anything for granted.

"Arguing is the basic way to enhance your creativity," he said.

Chinese are very good at practicing, which is why Chinese athletes and musicians are very good, Katz said.

As repetition is necessary for innovation, Katz believes China is ready for innovation.

"China is actually more ready than any other country in the world to innovate," he said. "Up until now, you always did what other people told you to do. Steve Jobs tells you to make iPhones, so, you make iPhones. But now, what China should think is, 'Why are we making iPhones when we can do something better ourselves?'"

"I'm sure China is at that stage now. In the next generation, China will probably make the most amazing things in the world," he said.



Katz said Chinese students do well on rote memorization but lack original ideas.

Photos provided by Eran Katz

Exhibition depicts ancient trepang trade between China and Australia

By Zhao Hongyi

The art exhibition "Trepang: China & the Story of Macassan - Aboriginal Trade" sheds light on the ancient trepang - or sea cucumber - trade between Chinese and Macassans and Aborigines in Australia centuries ago.

With artwork and nautical items on display - and places where people can listen to songs - the exhibition details the sea cucumber trade from the Macassans - trader fishermen also known as "Monsoon Traders" - of Indonesia with the Chinese as early as the beginning of the 18th century.

The Chinese have a long history of consuming sea cucumber, which they believe to be good for health. The dynamic overseas trade in the early years of the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) reached the islets in Southeast Asia. By exporting porcelain, silk, tea and silver, the empire was able to secure many goods from the islands.

By that time, Macassans had reached the northern part of the Australian continent and established close relations with the people there.

Macassans knew the value of sea cucumber to the Chinese, and also that they could be found in abundance at the bottom of the sea around the Australian coast. Aborigines learned how to harvest, process and pack the echinoderm.

These were sold to Macassan businessmen who sailed north to Macau and the coast of modern-day Guangdong Province and resold to Chinese consumers.

Chinese artist Zhou Xiaoping spent 22 years learning to paint this topic with John Bulunbulun, a famous artist of the Aborigines. They co-produced many works, including paintings and porcelain goods.

The widow and son of Bulunbulun and representatives from other aboriginal groups in Australia performed traditional music and dance



Portrait of John Bulunbulun, who died last year, and his son (left) and widow (right)
CFP Photo

at the exhibition's opening ceremony on April 1.

Visitors also got a glimpse of how Aborigines lived by looking at items such as handmade sails, smoking pipes and knives.

"There is enough to change our traditional understanding that has prevailed for a very long time," Marcia Langton, a professor from the University of Melbourne who has devoted her life to protecting

Aborigines' history, culture and life, said at the opening ceremony.

"In reality, the Chinese and Australians did not miss the global trade wave that followed the age of European exploration after James Cook's discovery of Australia in 1770," the professor said. "They were actually at the forefront of expanding international trade."

"We hope the exhibition provides a good example for protecting Aborigines and demonstrating the long history of bilateral relationship between our two countries," said Graeme Leslie Meehan, Minister Counselor from the Australian embassy.

"China and Australia have such a long history of bilateral trade," said Ian Bauert, president of Rio Tinto China business. "Only today, the items exchanged are mineral ores."

The exhibition at Capital Museum will be on display until May 29.

Countries adjust visa policies for Chinese students

By Zhao Hongyi

In recent months, a number of countries - many of which are top destinations for Chinese students - have adjusted their visa policies toward foreign students. Here's what Chinese students planning to study in Australia, the US or UK should know.

Australia lowers requirements

The Australian embassy officially lowered the deposit requirements for its Subclass 573 student visa for Chinese students applying to study in the country, effective April 2.

The Subclass 573 visa is designed for foreign students applying for a Bachelor's degree, Associate Degree, Graduate Certifi-

cate, Graduate Diploma or Master's in Australia.

The deposit requirement has long been a heavy burden to many Chinese parents and students interested in studying in Australia. Risk evaluation of Chinese students in this category resulted in the change: from "level 4" to level 3.

"Under level 4, applying students would have to show their financial certificates to demonstrate the capability of paying their fees and living costs in the first three years in Australia," said Chen Luyi, consultant from Jinjili Studying Abroad Agency. "Level 3 requires only demonstrating financial support for the first 24 months, reducing the deposit by nearly a third."

The new policy also allows the

deposit to come from any "legitimate sources" and not just relatives and Australian citizens.

"Due to the lower requirements, the embassy will be more diligent in reviewing the documents," Chen said. "Chinese students need to prepare their applications and documents and certificates more carefully."

The US welcomes Chinese students

The US embassy in Beijing held a press conference on April 4 to discuss the procedures for applying for student visas to study during the summer. The embassy reminded students to "prepare early and apply properly."

In 2010, the US Embassy and Consulates in China received more

than 800,000 applications for non-immigrant visas, a 30 percent increase over the previous year. More than 680,000 applications were approved - more than 80 percent - said Linda Donahue, Minister Counselor and Consul General of the US embassy.

UK fighting against "bogus schools"

The UK is imposing higher evaluation criteria on student visa applications, particularly those who are enrolling in unqualified schools, colleges and universities in the UK - "bogus schools."

More than 100,000 Chinese students studied in the UK in 2010, according to the UK embassy in Beijing. More than 60,000 received higher education

in qualified schools. Less than 3,000 students were enrolled in primary schools, which means more than 30,000 Chinese students were in bogus schools.

Most of these uncertified schools provide services like language and vocational training. The UK government requires these schools to obtain a "highly trusted sponsor" before they receive any students, which means these schools have to report how many students they receive and how many they give degrees to.

According to the Interior Department of the UK government, the new policy toward international students will reduce their number by 80,000 this year, of which nearly 20,000 are from China.

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BEIJING TODAY

Booze and brains – pub quiz brings fun to intellectual competition

By Liang Meilan

As a quintessential aspect of pub culture, the pub quiz – also known as bar trivia – has found quite the niche in Beijing's bar scene.

The pub quiz is said to have originated in Liverpool, UK, in the mid-20th century, and serves as an outlet for individuals who want to live up their nights or for those who need an outlet for all their knowledge – all to the backdrop of socializing and booze.

One recommended event is the free trivia game at The Kro's Nest, run by two Americans, every Thursday night starting at 8 pm. Between 60 and 80 expats participate every Thursday.

The first quiz was on January 27, hosted by Jim Kirchhoff, 30, an entrepreneur, and Anthony Tao, 26 (an editor at this paper).

Borrowing from a universal format – the host asks questions and teams of up to six try to answer – The Kro's Nest quiz gives prizes to each of four round winners. The two teams with the highest scores at the end then face off for the grand prize, with the higher-scoring team getting to choose the final category.

The winner takes home their choice of a bottle of red wine or vodka.

The two-man quiz team of Kirchhoff and Tao has incorporated some unique features to amuse attendees.

The fourth round, for instance, is the Roulette Round, where three categories are randomly drawn out of a pool of 10 rotating categories.

"There is a variety of possible choices, ranging from art to geography to potpourri to science to sports, to fun ones like 'quickness' and 'wipeout,'" Tao said.

There is also a Wager Round, where teams bid up to 3 points for each of two questions. Questions run the gamut of categories, from "What battle in American history

saw the origin of the quote, 'Don't fire until you see the whites of their eyes'?" to "What is Shakespeare's shortest play?" to "What is the chemical formula of sodium hypochlorite – household bleach?"

People attend trivia for different reasons – some to see how knowledgeable they are, others to take the occasion to drink and unwind from a day's work in a fun, relaxing atmosphere.

"Our trivia attempts to give participants the best of both worlds: a fun time centered around good beer, upbeat music and challenging questions," Tao said.

And fierce competition always produces impressive and memorable moments. "We've definitely had some teams make impressive come-from-behind victories," Kirchhoff said. "Recently a team scored a perfect 6 in the final round to move into second place, where they were able to beat the No. 1 team in the finals to claim victory."

Since everyone's been drinking for a couple hours throughout the duration of the quiz, impromptu dance parties erupt at the end, adding to the fun.

Although The Kro's Nest is the newcomer to Beijing's trivia scene, it doesn't lack regulars. Kevin Reitz, 33, from the US, has yet to miss any of the 10 quizzes so far.

"I think pub quizzes are usually too serious," he said. "Everyone is quiet and listening to questions. But these guys are focused on having fun and making it like a party. They give out shots and drinks every round, so even if you don't do well in one category, there's always a chance to win something later."

The quiz is also famous – and unique – for its "chug-off" tie-breaker. Usually ties are settled



Jim Kirchhoff presenting questions at The Kro's Nest trivia.

Photo provided by Anthony Tao

in one of five ways, but if the chug-off category is drawn, contestants will step up to the front and see who can finish a pint of beer first. Their team then wins the round prize.

"Running a quiz is a great way to socialize with your friends and meet new people in a relaxed and fun setting," Kirchhoff said. "You don't have to combat overly loud, thumping music, as you do

in some bars.

"We like to be social anyway, and this just provides a regular time, location and venue to do that with people whose company we generally enjoy."

Other weekly free pub quizzes around town

Monday

The Bookworm

Where: 4 Nan Sanlitun Lu, Chaoyang District
When: 8 pm
Tel: 6591 9161

Tuesday

Stumble Inn

Where: S3-31, 3/F, Sanlitun Village South, 19 Sanlitun Lu, Chaoyang District
When: 8:30 pm
Tel: 6417 7794
Tim's Texas BBQ

Where: 2 Xiushui, 14 Dongdaqiao Lu, Chaoyang District
When: 8 pm
Tel: 6591 9161

Wednesday

Lush

Where: 2/F, Building 1, Huaping Jiayuan, Chengfu Lu, Haidian District
When: 8 pm
Tel: 8286 3566
Paddy O'Shea
Where: 28 Dongzhimenwai Dajie, Chaoyang District

When: 8:30 pm

Tel: 6415 6389

Frank's Place

Where: 9-3 Jiangtai Xilu, Chaoyang District
When: 7:30 pm

Tel: 6437 8399

Thursday

The Kro's Nest

Where: 35 Xiaoyun Lu, Chaoyang District
When: 8 pm

Tel: 8391 3131

Celebrating Tomb-sweeping with traditional pastries

By Liang Meilan

Experiencing authentic and traditional festivals, including their rituals and foods, can be a memorable experience for visitors of foreign countries.

Last Sunday afternoon, 17 expats teamed up at The Fig Tree to learn to make a traditional Chinese cold pastry called *zituimo*, eaten by rural households in Shanxi Province during Tomb-sweeping Festival, which fell on April 5 this year.

Much of steamed *zituimo* is made from a special flour produced by *Xuehua*, baking powder and fine granulated sugar.

Participants kneaded the dough into various animal shapes and whimsical figures that were then steamed, painted, baked and hung to air dry.

"One student created a Sponge

Bob *zituimo* and proudly wore it around his neck, causing the whole room to burst into laughter," said Erin Henshaw, who is on the pastry school's staff.

"Everyone really got into the pastry making. The kids had so much fun kneading and shaping the dough, and then coloring the final creations. One very young kid proceeded to eat his mother's creations as soon as it was finished, saying he was very hungry," said Lin Zhong, the school's owner and chef.

While teaching students how to make the pastry, Zhong talked about the history and background of Tomb-sweeping Festival and why people in Shanxi eat *zituimo*. Students listened attentively.

Tomb-sweeping Festival is a public holiday in which people sweep their ancestors' graves in



Learning traditional Chinese festival foods at The Fig Tree

Photo provided by The Fig Tree

their hometowns.

There are hundreds of kinds of sacrifices used in the ritual, including paper (to represent money)

and pastries. The types of pastries vary according to regions.

"The *zituimo* I taught bears the name of the hero Jie Zitui,

who died for his principles and values," Zhong said. "His admonition to his pupil king to be 'qing' [clean, uncorrupted] and 'ming' [brilliant] became the name of the holiday (Qingming) ordained to commemorate his death."

The Fig Tree is well known for authentic French pastries. Zhong is a graduate of Blue Ribbon school in France and holds numerous classes. The bakery has so far hosted Macaroon Day (March 20), Moon Cake Class (Mid-Autumn Festival) and Pumpkin Pie Class (Thanksgiving).

"The reason we are so keen on holidays is that pastry-making usually coincides with holidays, and that is true for China and the rest of the world," Zhong said.

Beijing welcomes tree planting and adoption



Time to plant trees again!

CFP Photo

By Zhao Hongyi

Ever since 1978, March 12 has been known as "Planting Trees Day" in China, a top-down effort to encourage provincial leaders to rally civilians to plant trees wherever possible for an entire month.

This year's tree-planting events were delayed due to the late arrival of spring, but were formally held on April 2 with president Hu Jintao and several top Chinese leaders planting trees that day.

As early as four years ago, the General Office of the Capital Forestation Commission General, the task force promoting tree planting, released information on 30 pieces of land available for people to plant trees on, though individ-

uals and organizations must first register and apply online.

Most of the land is in the suburban districts and counties, though not too far from downtown. The total area is 75,000 hectares.

The commission encourages individuals and institutions to adopt already planted trees and patches of grass, especially in urban centers downtown. It lists 151 downtown areas where about 400 trees are up for adoption.

Five large-scale parks listed 200,000 trees for adoption, of which 2,600 trees are older than 100 years. The five parks are Beijing Botanical Garden, the Summer Palace, Beihai Park, Zhongshan Park and

Yuyuantan Park.

Beijing Botanical Garden (tel: 6259 1283) allows one-year adoptions and in exchange lets the adopter visit the park for free any time. The Summer Palace (tel: 6288 1144) has more than 800 ancient trees, 30,000 new ones and 100,000 square meters of grassland for adoption.

Beihai Park (tel: 6403 3225) has a number of trees older than a thousand years available for adoption. Beijing Zhongshan Park (tel: 6605 5431) has grasslands, while Yuyuantan Park (tel: 8865 3767) offers many imported trees and flowers for adoption on three-year bases.

Adopters contribute cash for the maintenance of the trees

and grasslands. In exchange, they receive free entrance to the parks where their adopted trees or grasslands are found.

This year, the commission is encouraging residents and institutes to adopt trees and grasslands in the communities where they live and work. It encourages residents to start various green initiatives, such as rooftop gardens.

For more information, please visit bjyl.gov.cn. For inquiries and registration, call: 8427 3060

General Office of the Capital Forestation Commission

Where: 1 Xiaohuangzhuang Bei Jie, Andingmen Wai, Dongcheng District

Open: 9 am - 12:30 pm, 1:30-6 pm

Donations needed to support students in southwest China

By Zhao Hongyi

In February, China Development Research Foundation released a report showing students in remote mountainous areas in Guizhou Province lack the nutrition they need, and appealed to the public for donations to support them.

The survey found 12 percent of the students suffer from stunted growth and 72 percent reported feeling hungry during class.

Among students living in the dorms, 10 boys and 7 girls were underweight, and 11 boys and 9 girls were at least 9 centimeters shorter than average children their age.

Most of the schools in the area can't provide food for the students - they barely have enough money for heating - even though the government has stipulated that on average, every student should get 2.3 yuan's worth of meals every day.

More seriously, in some remote mountainous areas,

schools lack the ability to set up proper living arrangements. Students have to spend four hours walking mountainous terrain to get to school, according to media reports.

These schools ask students to take care of themselves for lunch.

The lucky ones pack potatoes and corn for lunch. Many, however, go through classes every day without eating.

In Guizhou's Yangchang Town in Nayong County, only three elementary schools have enrolled in the free-lunch program subsidized by the government.

In February, a free-lunch campaign was initiated by about 500 journalists and social workers in Guizhou, Guiyang Province. It has recently drawn nationwide attention.

The campaign secured about 160,000 yuan in donations in its first 40 hours, Deng Fei, one of the volunteers, posted on his Weibo microblog. The first free-



Students from a school in Guizhou Province receive food as part of the country's first free-lunch program. Photo provided by Tianfu Zaobao

lunch trial began at a school in Guiyang last Saturday.

The campaign plans to run for as long as it takes the government to create a feasible and reliable program to guarantee students get lunches.

The campaign has officially invited individuals and companies to donate: it costs 3 yuan to give a student a lunch.

Here are two foundations that accept donations:

China Development Research Foundation

Add: Tunlien Tower, 8 Desheng-

men Dong Dajie, Xicheng District

Tel: 8408 0188

Fax: 8408 0188-8100

Website: cdrf.org.cn

China Social Welfare Education Foundation

Bank account: 3506 0188

0000 50322 / China Everbright Bank, Beijing Branch, Chaoyang Subbranch

Postal address: Room 3305, Zhongmin Tower, 7 Baiguang Lu, Xicheng District

Tel: 5867 9382 / 9385

Fax: 5867 9383

Website: 51give.org

ASK Beijing Today

Email your questions to: weiyang@ynet.com

I canceled my trip for the Songkran (water-splashing) festival in Thailand due to work. Is there any chance a similar festival will happen in China?

The annual Water-Splashing Festival - also known as the Festival for Bathing the Buddha - is the most important holiday for the Dai ethnic group. It usually starts in the middle of April - the sixth month in the Dai calendar - and lasts for half a month. You can see this festival in Xishuangbanna, Yunnan Province, home of the Dais.

I have a 10-year-old son who is fascinated with Muay Thai. Where can I find a Thai boxing school for him?

Black Tiger Academy at Club Hero has Muay Thai classes tailor-made for children between the ages of 4 and 12. The school teaches not only martial arts, but discipline, confidence and physical fitness. Participants are divided into two groups: the Little Tigers (4 to 8 years old) and the Tiger Team (9 to 12 years old), and there are some interactive events where parents can get involved.

Classes are team-based; students often work in groups of two or more. All classes are taught in English.

Where: Club Hero, Suit 110, Building D, Cable 8 Loft Yard, 8 Langjia Yuan (west of Wanda Plaza), Jianguo Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Every Saturday and Sunday, 10-11 am (closed at end of summer holiday)

Tel: 8918 3249; 8656 7818

Cost: 900 yuan for two months.

I'm looking for a salsa class. I'm an absolute beginner and know nothing about the dance. Because I work in the daytime, I can only join evening or weekend classes.

Check popular salsa places like Salsa Caribe; many salsa teachers practice with their students there, and you'll easily find an instructor. Salsa Latinos has salsa lessons every Wednesday, Thursday and Sunday from 8:30 pm to 9:30 pm.

Salsa Caribe

Where: 4 Gongti Bei Lu, Chaoyang District

Tel: 6507 7821

Open: 6 pm - late

Salsa Latinos

Where: A12, Nanxingcang, Dongsishitiao, Dongcheng District

Tel: 6409 6997

Open: 7 pm - late

(By Liang Meilan)

Road to fame

Young artists rise through competition

By He Jianwei

If looking at sales alone, the contemporary art scene seems short on new blood. Fashioning themselves "art agents," China's curators and galleries are taking up the challenge of discovering and promoting the next generation of young artists.

It may seem like a coincidence that the most successful young artists of the last decade were discovered through competitions at the same galleries. However, for these young artists, competitions are often the only vehicle to the market.

Last month, one art competition awarded six new artists from its pool of 600 candidates. Both the founder of the competition and the director of the gallery said they were confident that this year's picks will fare better on the market than picks of past competitions, but only time will tell whose work buyers will choose to embrace.



Bronze Award winner Zhong Jiang's 18 Years Old



Silver Award winner Tian Tian's Passing



Bronze Award winner Yao Hua's Multi-dimensional World

Times Art Museum is exhibiting works by 56 artists for the Chinese New Year Painting Award 2011. The participants were selected from a pool of 600 candidates, all younger than 30.

Unlike their predecessors, the new generation creates images of easy life and imagination, and is not tied by a childhood spent watching cartoons.

The theme of this year's award, "Merry-Go-Round," is taken from the title of one candidate's painting.

"The theme reflects a yearning for childhood. It's also a figurative choice to show that the '70s generation is moving forward," said Wu Jin, the director of the competition and curator of the exhibition.

The first competition was held in 2004, but the idea of focusing on young artists dates back to 1999, when Wu himself was approaching 30. "The dominant contemporary artists were those born in the 1960s and 1970s, such as Zhang Xiaogang, Liu Xiaodong, Fang Lijun and Yue Minjun, whose names that have fetched the highest prices at auctions in the new millennium.

"My peers were turning 30 but were still unknown. Most artists find fame in their 30s, but I was already 30 and still unknown. So we weren't discovering a new crop of artists," Wu said.

"For most artists, their prime of creativity is between the ages of 30 and 40. Unless they get noticed in their 20s, it can be very difficult for them to support themselves and go on to create great works during this cru-

cial period."

A shortage of young artists resulted in the 1999 exhibition including works by several born in the '60s, such as Mao Yan and He Sen.

But four years later, as Wu visited more studios, he saw a new chance to discover the next generation of young artists to the public.

On a 2003 trip to Zhong Chunya's studio in Chengdu, Sichuan Province, the artist recommended Wu meet the young Xiong Yu. In Chengdu, Fang Xiaokun introduced him to the public.

"I could only describe their works as 'special' and 'interesting.' Their teachers also thought they were special, but they didn't know how to introduce them to the public. I decided to hold a competition, through which I could discover the next generation of artists, but also the public, and would get a chance to see their work," Wu said.

After the competition, nominated works were put on temporary exhibit where they could attract curators, gallery directors, art dealers and collectors.

One such "art hunter" was Fang Fang, the director of Star Gallery, who discovered many new works worth exhibiting, such as those by Ouyang Chun, by following up with several artists at that first competition.

Fang first saw Ouyang's paintings

during the nomination round. "I only saw two photos of his paintings, but I was shocked. His cartoon and graffiti styles were fresh at the time," Fang said.

He called Ouyang and visited the artist's studio immediately. He was shocked to find his 300,000-yuan yearly investment in Ouyang paid off in *Lantern Festival*, his first painting sold for 200,000 yuan to assemble with Liu Zhizhi.

"At first, it was a risk to invest so much before making a profit, but the payoff has proved I made the right decision. I made the right decision to become more known, but I have also discovered a promising designer," Fang said.

Ouyang became a rising star and appeared in numerous publications, but the artist preferred a quiet life and after a year, he signed a three-year contract with Fang.

"That said experience made me rethink how I could be a better agent," he said.

Fang found a second chance in Gao Yu, another artist he met through the first competition. "I realized my promotion strategy had to suit the artist's personality," he said.

Fang paid Gao between 400 and 40,000 yuan for each piece. In addition to solo exhibitions, he also encouraged Gao to get involved with some corporate clients.

"It was a win-win policy. Gao became more famous with the general public, and

the brands won more customers by using his creations," Fang said.

In 2008, Gao's *Beat the Tiger* sold for 1.12 million yuan at Beijing Hanchai Auction: it was the first time a work by a 20-year-old artist sold for more than 1 million yuan at auction. Last year, he sold another work with another 4.78-million-yuan sale.

Although Gao has been successful in the market, critics have not been kind. "Turning an artist into a star may have been too blatant a promotion. It works for Gao, because he likes collaborating with big brands and seeing himself in the spotlight," said Liu Zhizhi, one of the ways for young artists to succeed. I hope one day the critics can see artistic value in his works," Fang said.

The second competition was held three years later in 2007, and the third four years later. "The competition is like a contract between the gallery and the artist. We need to find a way to promote the artist's work, and artists we pick are embraced by the market or forgotten," Wu said.

Although Wu brought many artists from the '70s generation to fame, he now pins his hopes on the new generation.

"The '70s artists were a generation in transition, when it's something they were doing, but they were not yet a generation. It's luckier because they grew up in an era of economic transition, but it will take a lot of work for them to bring their work to the public attention and make an impact on our culture."

And one's impact is what history remembers.



Silver Award winner Zhang Yeang's 14



Bronze Award winner Zhao Huan's No Title



Golden Award winner Wang Daishan's No. 6 Earthly Flower

Photos provided by China New Painting Award

Singapore's top bookseller brings English offerings to CBD



Photos provided by Page One

By Chu Meng

Page One, Singapore's biggest bookseller and publisher, opened its flagship store in Beijing's World Trade Center Tower 3 last Saturday.

In the week since, the store has carved out a niche as the city's first and only bookstore dealing in quarterly English publications and Top 50 bestsellers from North America and Europe. It also boasts an impressive collection of books imported from Hong Kong and Taiwan, where the printing industry continues to use traditional characters and prints books vertically from right to left.

Its initial stock of 150,000 books includes fiction titles as well as non-fiction books about life, economics and art. English books account for 75 percent of its stock, with the remainder being greater China imports.

Page One Beijing plans to synchronize its book launch dates with its overseas locations. However, a spokesman for the store said some releases may be delayed if book shipments become stuck in customs. To expedite approval, Page One has been cooperating with the state-owned China National Publications Import and Export Corporation.

"Our ground cooperation with the corporation guarantees us faster customs approval than any of our competitors in Beijing. Because we sell such a large quantity of books, our prices are comparatively low. Most books are sold for their cover price plus tariff with no additional markup," said Liu Gui, CEO of Page One China.

Page One opened its first store in Singapore in 1983 and quickly became known for its comprehensive collection of art and design books. Since then, it has expanded to Thailand, Hong Kong and Taiwan. The first mainland store opened

last June in Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province, but sold only Chinese books.

The interior decorations of each chain store are tailored to suit local designs. In Beijing, the store is modeled on an ancient sishu, a traditional private school with brown furniture and shelves.

"The imported books give me a window through which I can broaden my knowledge and appreciation of culture. It was my first chance to read a book vertically in traditional Chinese. A lot of the books from Hong Kong and Taiwan are professional publications from the humanities and arts," said Zou Hong, a Chinese visitor who works in an English design environment.

But for all the fanfare, it's hard to overlook a sad reality of the book industry: bookstores make meager profits, if any.

Page One does not appear to be changing this, especially given the costly rent of its location in the central business district. It will face increasingly vicious competition as more online multinational book sellers expand into the China market.

These risks were thoroughly considered, said Mark Tan, central executive officer of

Page One Group. The company had originally planned to push and open a flagship store before the Olympic Games, but decided instead to devote more time to researching the market.

"You can't replace the smell of fresh ink and the feel of a tangible book in your hands. Our success in other places has shown us that the number of people with the same love of printed books is not small," Tan said.

He may be right.

But retail is only one segment of Page One's Asia business. It has long cooperated with Chinese publishers to

"As a publisher, we aim to promote cultural understanding within Asia and bring awareness of our culture to the Americas and Europe using our publications and retail space."



Mark Tan, central executive officer of Page One Group

bring mainstream English publications on design and the arts to the School of Arts at Tsinghua University and The Central Academy of Fine Arts.

As a publisher, Page One acquires the rights to new titles with a focus on art and design. It also publishes these titles in the US and Europe, often selling off territorial rights.

As a distributor, the company's network in Asia makes it a much sought-after partner for international publishers looking to expand their distribution into Asia.

"Asian nations always have a weaker voice compared to English-speaking countries in the book world. Our cultural contributions sometimes go neglected. As a publisher, we aim to promote cultural understanding within Asia and bring awareness of our culture to the Americas and Europe using our publications and retail space," Tan said.

He said Beijing's second retail outfit will open in 798 Art Zone within the year, and that offerings at both stores will be expanded. Page One plans to expand both stores with coffee and snack areas.

Page One Beijing

Where: Booth 201, floor B3, World Trade Center Tower 3, Guomao, Chaoyang District

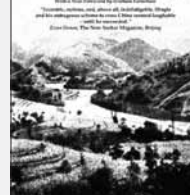
Open: 10 am - 9:30 pm
Tel: 8535 1055

Trends Lounge book listing

Located at The Place, Trends Lounge is a bookstore and cafe with a wide selection of books about international art, design and architecture.

Across China on Foot

The Travel Classic by Edwin J. Dingle



Across China on Foot

By Edwin John Dingle, 445pp, China Economic Review Publishing, \$21.49

In the early 1900s, Dingle embarked on a mapping expedition of China. Overcoming incredible odds and life-threatening situations, he succeeded in crossing areas of China where no foreigner had ever been before, and eventually reached Tibet.



China Under the Empress Dowager: The History of the Life and Times of Tzu Hsi

By Edmund Backhouse and John O. Bland, 525pp, Trubner, \$161.5

The authors take the readers inside the Forbidden City during the reign of Empress Dowager Cixi (1861-1908), a world of power-thirsty eunuchs and concubines. The book was unique for its time in its reliance on Chinese source materials, some of which may have been fabricated. As entertaining as it is enlightening, the book presaged the fall of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911).



101 Essential Chinese Movies

By Simon Fowler, 224pp, Earnshaw Books, \$24.99

With detailed descriptions of each selection and countless recommendations for further viewing, this book introduces the greatest mainland movies from the silent era to the present.

(By He Jianwei)

Thrill-seekers burn rubber with go-karts

By Chu Meng

In the 1950s, a sailor in the US Navy got bored and decided to power a small kart with an old lawnmower engine. His invention gave birth to the sport of modern motor racing.

One group of local thrill-seekers has recently opened the city's first professional indoor kart racing club to have weekend race.

Qiu Yao, 25, has been a professional field motor racing judge for seven years and co-founded Beijing's first indoor kart racing club at the U-Speeding Go-Karting Center.

Since its March 15 opening, the center has offered regular training sessions and weekend races. It plans to start hosting biannual tournaments in the near future, Qiu said.

The club offers a much-needed outlet for its 30 energetic members, who had no outlet for their passion for motor racing and thrilling speeds before its opening.

New sport for China

Many in China think indoor racing karts are the common bumper cars found at amusement parks. But kart racing has a long history predating the amusement ride.

Kart racing, also called go-karting, is an open-wheel motor sport where contestants operate small, open, four-wheeled vehicles called racing karts, go-karts or gearboxes, depending on the design. Races take place on scaled-down circuits.

Today's televised motor racing sports are classified into three categories depending on the race distance: point-to-point field races, endurance rally races and cross-country races.

The widely known Formula One World Championship is only one sub-branch of the point-to-point field race.

Kart racing began in the 1950s when a soldier in the US Navy outfitted a four-wheel kart with a lawnmower engine. The sport that developed gave birth to all modern forms of motor racing, and today

serves as a gateway to its harsher professional children.

Many professional racers, such as Michael Schumacher and Kimi Räikkönen, cut their teeth on indoor kart races, Qiu said.

Karts vary widely in speed and some professional karts, such as the Superkarts used in the center, can reach speeds exceeding 260 kilometers per hour, said Lai Ming, a 27-year-old club member who previously trained under Han Han, China's best-known professional rally racer.

"The karts [we're driving] are equipped with racing motor engines but at lower ranks. Amusement karts intended for the general public at parks are usually limited to speeds of no more than 24 kilometers per hour. By comparison, most private cars on Beijing's streets travel at no more than 60 to 100 kilometers per hour," he said.

The club also has Juniorkarts, which use a 125cc two-stroke engine and weigh 150 kilograms with a driver. Juniorkarts have a top speed of 140 kilometers per hour and can accelerate from 0 to 100 kilometers per hour in 3 seconds.

Racing underground

Lai said kart racing at the club is one of the most important parts of his life today.

Three years ago, Lai left his professional racing training for a life in Beijing's then-thriving underground racing scene.

Back in 2006, one street racer, Chen Zhen, became famous overnight when he completed a loop around the 33-kilometer Second Ring Road in 13 minutes, earning him the nickname "13-Minute Boy." Chen was arrested and held in police custody for seven days for "endangering public security" after his achievement.

The legendary loop required speeds averaging 150 kilometers per hour on a downtown road notorious for its gridlock and on which a maximum speed limit of 80 kilometers per hour is enforced, Lai said.

Since then, the nickname has been bestowed on all racers who achieve or beat

the same time.

Chen became an icon for the underground racing scene, where people in their early 20s obsessed over completing Second Ring Road in the shortest time. The challenge was seen as a game for car buffs.

When strict government surveillance attempted to break up the scene, the underground racers relocated to outside the downtown area, Lai said.

Underground racers shifted their circuits from the downtown loops to the less-traveled suburban Fifth and Sixth Ring Roads. The clandestine races took place in the wee hours of the night: the stakes were the cars they drove.

"We never went back downtown because there were too many police there. Generally no one gave interviews. The scene was very low-key," Lai said.

Most racers were born into wealth and drove fast cars like Lamborghinis. Some were private businessmen in their 30s who switched from afternoons of golf to moonlighting as extreme racers.

But that life came to an end when the driver of a modified Mitsubishi ran over a 25-year-old pedestrian during an underground street race in Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province in 2009.

After the accident, the scene crumbled and left Lai and his friends searching for a new outlet.

Feel the thrilling speed

Three years later, Lai has tempered his enthusiasm for the extreme.

"At the time, there were no race tracks that people like me could go to. There was no release for the thrill-seekers, so we created one," he said.

Qiu said that aside from an extremely easy rally track in Hainan and the underdeveloped Shanghai Formula One scene, racing fans have never had a well-organized commercial event in China.

That may be because the industry is a cash burner. The current economy cannot support vocational racers because China's auto companies lack the money



and muscle of the Japanese, American and European firms that back many of the world's best racers and sponsor many tournaments.

"In China, we have to save up and spend out of our own pockets just to buy one racing-grade tire – an investment equal to a month's pay. Without an auto company to back racers and fund awards, a professional scene can't exist," Qiu said.

In the meantime, Qiu, Lai and other young racers have the karting club, a place they can experiment with dangers that would never be acceptable on a real race track – like racing in the dark.

"We'll be training for this kind of race for the second quarter of 2011. Our Superkarts have been fitted with neon lights, and the long circuits will be run with only an essential signal light turned on. Doing it this way should make the speed feel even more extreme," Qiu said.

Given their penchant for danger, the club has first aid facilities. All equipment is inspected to ensure it is safe and the race is supervised by well-trained guards.

In addition to monthly races, U-Speeding Go-Karting Center is also open to the public. Beginning racers without a driver's license can race on the club's professional circuit.

U-Speeding Go-Karting Center

Where: 1 Siyuan Qiao, Jingshun Lu, Chaoyang District
Open: 1pm – 1am Monday – Friday; 11am – 2am Saturday – Sunday
Tel: 8472 9399
Website: u-speed.com



Photos by Qiu Yao

Refresh yourself in time for spring

By Annie Wei

As the season changes, it's time we refresh our bodies, update our wardrobes and enjoy happy moments with family and friends.



Lomography's latest collection

Photo by Li Wei

Record every beautiful moment

It's time for going to the park, having picnics and doing outdoor sports. And taking pictures to record all your best moments.

Lomography's latest collection, Golden Week, includes three types of cameras (700 to 1,000 yuan) in gray and white.

The store is hosting a campaign that calls on "lomo" fans to take photos related to the Japanese earthquake last month.

Lomography

Where: 101, Door 2, Block 30, Sanlitun Lu, Chaoyang District
Open: noon - 9 pm
Tel: 6416 1868



Pure green plum extract, 130 yuan
Photo by Yu Tingmei

Daily detox

We constantly expose ourselves to toxins, whether it's by consuming low-quality oil at cheap restaurants, chemical residues on fruits and vegetables or booze on crazy nights out.

Over time, these toxins can cause a lot of health problems. Wang Mingyong, a health expert from Taiwan, has suggestions for taking a green and healthy daily detox.

First, he suggests drinking pure green plum extract (130 yuan for 120 grams, available on Taobao) for 10 days. Pure green plum extract contains lots of beneficial acids that help dissolve kidney stones. Dilute 3

grams in a liter of water and drink up.

The plum extract water is sour, but the taste isn't bad. One might feel sleepy after drinking it during the first two days.

Wang also suggests a week of drinking organic pure apple juice, 10 grams of magnesium sulfate and lime juice and olive oil (on the sixth day) to get rid of hepatolithiasis.

Anyone interested can find more information at the organic store Lohao City.

Lohao City

Where: 19 Chaoyang Gongyuan Lu, Chaoyang District
Open: 9 am - 9 pm
Tel: 5867 0265



Hot pants

Colorful trousers, hot pants and tops have been spotted on many street-chic photos since last fall, along with camel-colored everything.

This spring, brands like Zara, H&M, MNG and S are carrying such hot pants and silk tops. Pair these with a simple white T-shirt for a lovely young look.

Flat oxfords are back in style as a practical shoe for the sprintime. They pair well with Bermuda shorts or denim with a white cotton button-down shirt.

You can get oxfords from the brand DESQUARED2 at Shine and Stradivarius, a sister store

of Zara.

Shine

Where: Building 5-B1, Jianwai SOHO, 39 Dongsanhuan Zhong Lu, Chaoyang District
Open: 10 am - 8 pm
Tel: 5869 3496

Stradivarius

Where: 101, Building 1, U-Town Shopping Center, 2 Sanfeng Bei Li, Chaoyangmen Wai Dajie
Open: 10 am - 10 pm
Tel: 5977 5780



DESQUARED2's spring look

Photo provided by DESQUARED2

Stradivarius' spring look

Photos provided by Stradivarius

Dining out at lunchtime

By Annie Wei

This is the best time of the year for restaurants: spring is here, meaning peach blossoms, the return of green leaves and al fresco dining.

Beijing Today checked out the spring menu at a high-end, unique cafe in an old building and a quiet place for a business lunch.



Café 1901

Cafe inside 110-year-old building

A three-floor cafe and restaurant at Xi'anmen Avenue near the center of town is a great place to while away a few hours over cappuccino (32 yuan), a salad (38 yuan), fresh juice (38 yuan) and hot dishes (starting from 38 yuan).

The cafe is located inside one of the few European-style buildings left from the early 1900s. It was built as a dormitory for missionaries of Xishiku Cathedral (built in 1703), located just a 3-minute walk away.

These sort of upscale cafes located within historical buildings are rare around Shunyi, Dongcheng District or the central business district (CBD).

Owner and chef Li Jianwei, born in the 1980s, said he fell in love with the building at first sight.

Before starting Café 1901, Li had many diverse experiences, working as a chef at a star hotel, a real estate developer and an MTV and movie sub-producer. He rented the space for his eventual cafe last year.

"This part isn't like Sanlitun, where people go out and order steak, bread and salad," he said. He hopes the uniqueness of his cafe's offerings – coupled with the uniqueness of the old-time atmosphere – will attract both local and expat customers.

On typical weekday afternoons, only a few people lounge inside, using their laptops, reading or chatting quietly with friends.

We recommend the Osso Buco (98 yuan) with mashed potatoes and mixed mushrooms, which is also Li's favorite. Osso Buco is a traditional Milan dish,



A quiet corner of Café 1901

using a cross-cut of a veal shank from the knees. There is very little fat yet it tastes tender.

Li said his business benefits from his friendships with culinary schoolmates who work at different hotels.

"I use their suppliers," he said. Once every week, a friend from a leading hotel restaurant comes to train Li's staff and prepare his ingredients.

Li does not order beef from nearby Chinese restaurants, whose quality he dislikes. "Those are the low-end and cheap meats, tasting tender and soft only after being prepared in soda power," he said.

Another recommended dish is cream crab soup (58 yuan), fresh sea crab prepared with brandy and cream, tasting strong and a little bitter. "It's delicious to pair it with freshly baked black wheat bread," Li said.

Because most diners are local residents living or working around the neighborhood, they've yet to try these exotic offerings.

The cafe features a small balcony with two tables and four chairs. Come before 2 pm – before the sun has drifted west, behind buildings – to enjoy a sunny meal.

After brunch, explore the relaxing neighborhood around Xi'anmen Avenue, where local residents take strolls and small vendors sell roasted chestnuts and baozi.

Café 1901

Where: 101 Xi'anmen Dajie, Xicheng District
Open: 9 am – midnight
Tel: 6616 0335



Osso Buco, 98 yuan

Photos by Li Jianwei

New chef, new spring menu

Grill 79, the highest dining spot in the city, introduced its spring and summer menu with 28 new recipes two weeks ago.

American chef Ryan Dadufalza was the force behind it. As the executive chef who previously lived in Japan and Thailand, Dadufalza's dishes are light and fresh.

He prefers making the most of his ingredients. "For example, instead of using water, I use carrot juice to cook carrots in," he said. "This will not only retain the integrity of the base ingredients but will actually amplify their natural flavor."

Recommended new dishes include unroasted chicken with a foie gras au torchon: chicken with gold skin and supreme tenderness; and yellowtail ceviche, a main course for Grill 79's lunch set meals (160 yuan for two courses and 190 yuan with dessert).

New salads include spring garden with pumpnickel and Greek yogurt, comprising baby carrots, Brussels sprouts, radishes and peas – symbolizing the transition from winter to spring, Dadufalza said.



Caramelized egg tart



Un-roasted chicken

Some familiar dishes have been given a timely twist. The steak – which has been praised for its tenderness and quality – has been paired with vegetables like plums and white radishes. "It's a secret," Dadufalza said about the traditional flavor, which comes from his hometown in Guam.

The steak attains a slightly sour flavor that accentuates its savory quality. Traditional steak sauce is also offered.

The restaurant is also proud of its wine list, with wines from unique and small vineries all

over the world.

We recommend its Tokaji from Hungary, sweet, fruity and just right for dessert.

Grill 79 guarantees the safety of its ingredients, especially its seafood, as many diners have expressed concern of radiation from Japan.

Grill 79

Where: Floor 79, China World Summit Wing, 1 Jianguomen Wai Dajie, Chaoyang District

Open: 11 am – 2:30 pm, 5-10 pm

Tel: 6505 2299

Great business lunch deals

1949, a high-end dining spot in a courtyard near Sanlitun, is great for quiet and sunny lunches. On weekdays, its 70-yuan lunch set menu includes a salad, a main course and coffee or tea.

Its Sunday roast beef brunch (138 yuan), from 11 am to 4 pm, includes tapas, a salad bar, roast beef with yorkshire pudding, desserts and pastry, as well as coffee or tea. For another 30 yuan, you will get a draft of house wine (500 milliliters)

Taverna

Where: Courtyard 4 (behind Pacific Plaza), Gongti Bei Lu, Chaoyang District

Open: 11 am – 3 pm

Tel: 6501 8882

Life as a swirling circle

By He Jianwei

Entering Xu Zhongmin's exhibition at Today Art Museum, you can feel like stepping into the future, where machines move, dance, talk and perform; where viewers climb ladders and peer into big cylinders to see miniature people climbing ladders one after another; where installations spin and objects shine.

Xu's works include sculptures, installations, videos and robotics. He draws most of his inspiration from two disparate things: Tibet's mountains and the geodesic dome invented by American engineer and architect Buckminster Fuller.

It is a tradition for Tibetans to take pilgrimages around and up holy mountains, laying spinning prayer wheels along the way. "They endure hardship for several kilometers. It is both physically and spiritually exhausting for the pilgrims, yet they treat it as salvation," Xu said.

"When I'm creating my works, I'm also making a pilgrimage. I feel like it's a kind of self-salvation, bitter and sweet."

In one of Xu's works, miniature figures repetitively spin, climb, disappear and reappear. "I want to express how humans

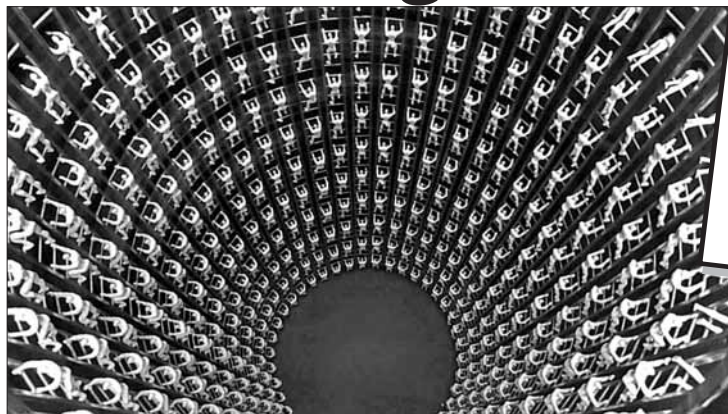


Photo provided by Today Art Museum

live and the meaning of living through these swirling installations," Xu said. "The life of a human being, as a whole, can be understood as a process involving circles and repetition."

Xu's works are a utopia: a world unto themselves.

"If the moving machines are a theatrical stage, the figures must be the performers," curator Huang Du said. "His works demonstrate the mysterious aspects of life."

Xu's view of utopia comes from Fuller's concept of the geodesic dome. "Fuller's

ambition was to create a design that would be a solution to the problems of material consumption and energy usage," Xu said.

"The landscape in Beijing is changing dramatically day by day. Everything we could dream up has already been realized."

Xu Zhongmin's Exhibition

Where: Today Art Museum, Building 4, Pingod Community, 32 Baiziwan Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until April 12, 10 am – 5 pm

Admission: 20 yuan, 10 yuan for students
Tel: 5876 9804

Saturday, April 9

Movie A Cat in Paris (2010)

This French animation tells the story of a cat called Dino who lives with a police officer's daughter by day and works with a burglar by night.

Where: Broadway Cinematheque, 2/F Building 4, north section of Museum of Modern Art (MOMA), 1 Xiangheyuan Lu, Dongcheng District

When: 4:10 pm
Admission: 40 yuan
Tel: 8438 8258 ext. 8008

Nightlife



Hoochie Coochie Gentleman

This band blends blues, rock and traditional Chinese music while mocking reality.

Where: Mako Livehouse, 36 Guangqu Lu, Chaoyang District

When: 8:30 pm
Admission: 30 yuan
Tel: 5205 1112

Exhibition



Art Exhibition of Jiang Baolin

This exhibition showcases 186 of Jiang's wash paintings, including the recently created series "Step into Torreya Woods of Thousands of Years" and representative works from each period of his 50-plus-year career.

Where: National Art Museum of China, 1 Wusi Dajie, Dongcheng District
When: Until April 13, 9 am – 5 pm (no entry after 4 pm)
Admission: Free
Tel: 6400 6326

Friday, April 8

Exhibition Carbon Selves – Jocelyn McGregor Solo Exhibition

While living at the gallery, McGregor created an installation using carbon-based materials – metaphors for the body – forcing readers to rethink the basic elements of nature.

Where: Where Where Exhibition Space, 319 Caochangdi Village, Chaoyang District

When: Until April 17, daily except Monday, 10 am – 6 pm
Admission: Free
Tel: 13510803790

Movie Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull (2006)

The fourth in the *Indiana Jones* series, one of Jones' colleagues is kidnapped after discovering a mysterious crystal skull in Peru. Jones embarks on an adventure to return the skull to the ancient city of Akator.

Where: China Film Archive, 3 Wenhuiyuan Lu, Xiaoxituan, Haidian District

When: 7 pm
Admission: 20 yuan
Tel: 8229 6153

Nightlife Dustin O'Halloran

This American pianist and composer has created many film soundtracks, including the ones for *Marie Antoinette* and *An American Affair*.

Where: The One Club, Building 5, 718 Art and Culture Zone, 19 Ganluyuan, Gaobeidian Bei Lu, Chaoyang District

When: 8:30 pm
Admission: 80 yuan advance purchase, 100 yuan at the door, 70 yuan for students
Tel: 13426117374



Sunday, April 10

Nightlife

Rusty Crown

This local hard rock band is celebrating its anniversary with three other bands: Poshang-cun, Emitter and Joker.

Where: Mao Livehouse, 111 Gulou Dong Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: 9 pm
Admission: 50 yuan, 40 yuan for students
Tel: 6402 5080

Movie

Pina Bausch: A Portrait (2001) and Models (1991)

Directed by photographer Peter Lindbergh, the first documentary is about Bausch creating her dance, "The Window Washer," and the second features interviews with supermodels such as Naomi Campbell, Cindy Crawford and Linda Evangelista.

Where: Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (UCCA), 798 Art District, 4 Jiuxianqiao

Lu, Chaoyang District

When: 6:30 pm
Admission: 15 yuan, 10 yuan for students
Tel: 8459 9269

Exhibition



The Oil Paintings of Lui Liu

This exhibition shows 40 of Liu's oil paintings created in the past two decades about the issues surrounding modern China.

Where: Today Art Museum, Building 4, Pingod Community, 32 Baiziwan Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until April 17, 10 am – 5 pm
Admission: 20 yuan, 10 yuan for students
Tel: 5876 9804

Upcoming

Nightlife

Digger & The Pussycats

This Australian band mixes garage punk, blues and party rock 'n' roll.

Where: Mao Livehouse, 111 Gulou Dong Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: April 13, 9 pm
Admission: 40 yuan
Tel: 6402 5080

Stage in May

Concert

Anne-Sophie Mutter Violin Recital

Where: Concert Hall of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: May 2, 7:30 pm
Admission: 280-1,080 yuan
Tel: 6655 0000

Peter Ritzen Piano Recital

Where: Poly Theater, 14 Dongzhimen Nan Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: May 6, 7:30 pm
Admission: 100-580 yuan
Tel: 6551 8058

Les Petits Chanteurs de Saint-Marc Choir

Where: Forbidden City Concert Hall (inside Zhongshan Park), 18 Zhaodengyu Lu, Xicheng District
When: April 8, 2 pm and 7:30 pm

Admission: 60-580 yuan
Tel: 6417 7845

Piotr Anderszewski Piano Recital

Where: Concert Hall of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: May 28, 7:30 pm
Admission: 80-480 yuan
Tel: 6655 0000

Dance

Offering / Fragrance presented by Beijing Modern Dance Company

Where: Theater Hall of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: May 18-19, 7:30 pm
Admission: 80-400 yuan
Tel: 6655 0000

Drama

Butterfly Metamorphosis

Where: Fengchao Theater, 200 meters east of Oriental Ginza, 12 Shizipo, Dongzhimen Wai Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: May 3-15, 7:30 pm
Admission: 50-200 yuan
Tel: 8836 8265

He and His Two Wives

Where: Poly Theater, 14 Dongzhimen Nan Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: May 21, 7:30 pm
Admission: 100-880 yuan
Tel: 6551 8058

Opera

Puccini's Opera: Tosca

Where: Opera House of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: May 12-15, 7:30 pm
Admission: 180-800 yuan
Tel: 6655 0000

(By He Jianwei)

Eat right to avoid spring fatigue

By Li Zhixin

As the weather warms, many office workers are complaining about sleepiness and fatigue.

Spring fatigue, more formally known as Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), is leaving many feeling short on energy and yawning throughout the day.

Sleep not a solution

King Lanlan, 31, an advertisement designer, has been feeling lethargic in spite of her very normal sleeping habits.

"When I stay in the office, even for a little while, I start feeling dizzy, tired and irritable. Sometimes I feel depressed and lose my appetite," she said.

At first she thought she wasn't getting enough sleep, but even 10 hours of sleep every night was not enough to solve her listlessness. "I started napping on the job in the afternoon, but my fatigue returns as soon as I wake up," she said.

Lack of energy, dizziness, muscle tension, loss of appetite and sleeping troubles are common symptoms of spring fatigue. Fatigue can also cause burning, itching eyes, lost of memory, profuse sweating and general discomfort.

Zhou Qinlu, a dietitian at Beijing Sports Science Institute, said sleep alone can't cure spring fatigue.

"The lack of sunlight during the winter and the low physical activity contribute to spring fatigue. Also a poor diet, which may be deficient in certain vitamins and minerals, can play a role in the onset of symptoms," she said.

Diets high in fats and carbohydrates but short on natural fruits and vegetables can dramatically boost one's risk of fatigue. "Try to eat more fibers and minerals and limit how many fats and sugars you are taking in," she said.

Herbal therapies for spring fatigue

Herbal medicines are also very effective for treating spring fatigue:

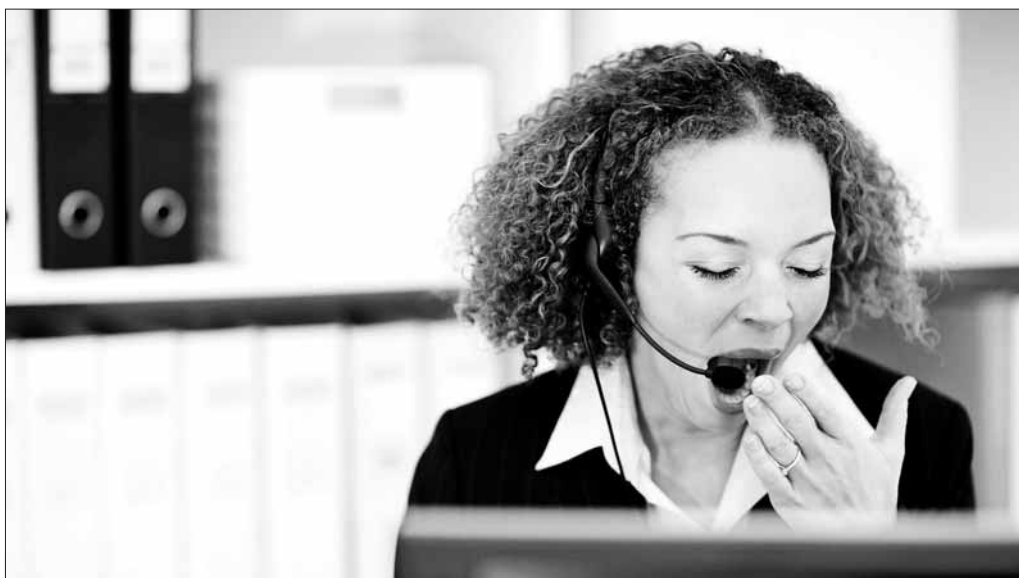
1. Ginger: its pungent smell is pleasant and its stimulating power promotes vitality and wellness.

2. Ginseng: helps the body fight stress and enhances energy, mental activity and physical fitness. It also fights viral infections and helps support the immune system. This herb is very powerful. Do not use ginseng if you have high blood pressure, heart disease or are hypoglycemic.

3. Ginkgo biloba: improves circulation and brain function.

4. Kelp and bee pollen: provides energy if fatigue is related to low blood pressure.

5. Licorice: a physical and mental stimulant.



CFP Photo

Diet tips to beat the blues

Some foods that have been tested to offer a quick hit of energy are:

1. Spinach and other leafy greens

Incorporate spinach and other leafy greens like fragrant garlic and celery into your diet as often as possible. Spinach is full of nutrients that are essential for battling fatigue and helping your body perform at its peak. It is not only one of the most iron-dense food sources on earth, but also extremely rich in magnesium, potassium and vitamin B, which is a brilliant source of energy.

"Low iron levels can cause both physical and mental fatigue, insomnia, loss of appetite as well as anemia," Zhou said. "Iron can help the body produce energy by delivering oxygen to the cells so they perform their best. When you run low on oxygen, your cells start slowing and shutting down."

Iron also supports the immune system, and that helps to battle all forms of fatigue.

Spinach is also an excellent source of vitamin C, which boosts iron absorption.

Magnesium and potassium are other minerals that play a key role in energy, digestion and the regulation of nerves and muscle tone. They are involved in hundreds of enzymatic reactions throughout the body and directly affect the muscles, kidneys, liver, brain and cardiovascular, digestive and nervous systems. "Even a slight deficiency of magnesium can cause your body to work harder and

become exhausted," she said.

Some symptoms of magnesium and potassium deficiency include fatigue, sleeping difficulty, confusion, lack of appetite, imbalanced blood sugar levels, depression, muscle weakness, muscle cramps, muscle spasms, muscle soreness and body tension.

2. Yogurt

Yogurt is so soft that your body process it more quickly than solid foods, making it a great source of quick energy.

And the energy rush you get from yogurt is long-lasting because it has lots of protein and carbohydrates. Proteins can stay in the stomach longer than carbohydrates and turn into a steady source of energy.

Yogurt contains rich probiotics which can help ease symptoms of chronic fatigue syndrome. The pro-biotic supplement can boost levels of the amino acid tryptophan in the brain and promote feelings of calm and tranquility, helping to combat both physical and emotional fatigue.

Pro-biotics can also maintain a healthy gut flora, protecting the bowels from pathogens and eliminating harmful bacteria. Like fiber, probiotics are a powerful digestive aid.

"Yogurt alone can give you a quick hit of energy; if you add some healthy toppings like nuts, ground flaxseed, fruit, honey, raisins or oats in it, it will be an even greater energy booster. But make sure to choose low-fat and plain yogurts," Zhou said.

3. Tuna

Fish is great to eat if you are trying to avoid fatigue. Daily consumption of fish will stimulate your body and reload it with a lot of energy.

Tuna are especially rich in omega 3 fatty acids, which are known as essential fats because they're the only fats the body actually requires. These healthy fats lower the glycemic index of foods and are also a superior energy source.

Fats stay in the stomach longer than carbohydrates and proteins, and the result is a slow-burning fuel that provides long-lasting energy. Omega 3 fatty acids help maintain healthy cells and are found naturally in almost all nuts and seeds. Flaxseeds and walnuts are particularly rich in these healthy fats.

4. Nuts and seeds

Nuts and seeds like sesame seeds, sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds, almonds, cashews, walnuts and hazelnuts are packed with high-quality proteins and omega 3 fatty acids. Eating them regularly can ensure you are getting enough iron, manganese, magnesium, phosphorus, copper, vitamins B1, B2, B5, B6 and tryptophan — all of which make nuts and seeds potent weapons in the fight against drowsiness.

5. Oatmeal

Although oatmeal isn't particularly low on the glycemic index, nutritionists still encourage people to eat oatmeal in the morning as carbohydrates spend the least amount of time in the stom-

ach. Breakfast is especially important because it replenishes energy reserves and sets the tone for the whole day.

Oatmeal is a super food when it comes to supporting digestive health. The high dietary fiber content in oatmeal can promote digestive health, encourages bowel regularity and helps prevent constipation and weight gain.

Besides its high fiber content, oatmeal also provides magnesium, protein and phosphorus that significantly affect energy levels.

It's also a good source of vitamin B1, which is crucial for energy production. Symptoms of too little B1 include a lack of energy and loss of appetite. Along with other trace elements, vitamin B1 supports proper muscle and nerve functions.

6. Beans

Beans — especially super-performing soybeans — are a concentrated source of stable and slow-burning energy due to their unique nutritional composition: they are low in fat and have a low glycemic rating, but they are high in fiber and minerals including potassium, magnesium, phosphorus, copper and iron, and provide a good balance of carbohydrates and proteins.

The proteins and fiber in beans can work together to help balance blood sugar and prevent spikes. The other minerals can help relax nerves and muscles and keep blood circulating smoothly.

Rustic spots for picnics and barbecues



By Zhang Dongya

Trees are turning green, flowers are blooming – it must be time to head outdoors to enjoy spring.

There are few better places to spend a relaxing afternoon than in one of the city's "countryside parks," where visitors can hold barbecues and take pictures of blossoms.

On the outskirts of the city, some of these parks are a challenge to get to, but well worth the trip.



Photos by Zhang Han



Dongba Country Park

Dongba, or the Eastern Dam, is a recently developed park on the periphery of Chaoyang District. Located outside Fifth Ring Road, it is so big that it could take hours to walk its perimeter.

Willows are turning green and apricot trees are now blooming. Long avenues are lined with big poplar trees. The park doesn't see many visitors, either, so you'll feel like you're walking in a faraway village. Some people can be seen working in the fields, watering saplings or herding sheep.

People from neighboring residential communities go to relax and exercise, while others from the city go to spend a day barbecuing and enjoying time with the family.

The best place to grill is on the grass or inside the

pavilions, though you can also fire up your grill in the parking lot.

Near the park's west gate is a large pool where one can watch red carps and ducks.

Some ancillary facilities such as shops and a visitors center are still under construction.

Getting there: Drive along Yaojiayuan Lu to East Fifth Ring Road. Then drive along Dongba Zhong Lu and go past Pingfangqiao, then drive in Juzifang direction for 20 minutes.

You can also take bus 468 or 686 to Chaoyang Xincheng, or bus 350, 729 or 750 to Juzifang.

Admission: Free

Note:

1. A free parking lot is next to the north gate.

2. Prepare enough food and water, since there are no concessions inside the park.

Now is a good time for visitors to view blossoms and hold barbecues at countryside parks on the outskirts of Beijing.

CFP Photo



Willows are turning green – a sign that spring is really here.

CFP Photo

Tips for barbecuing

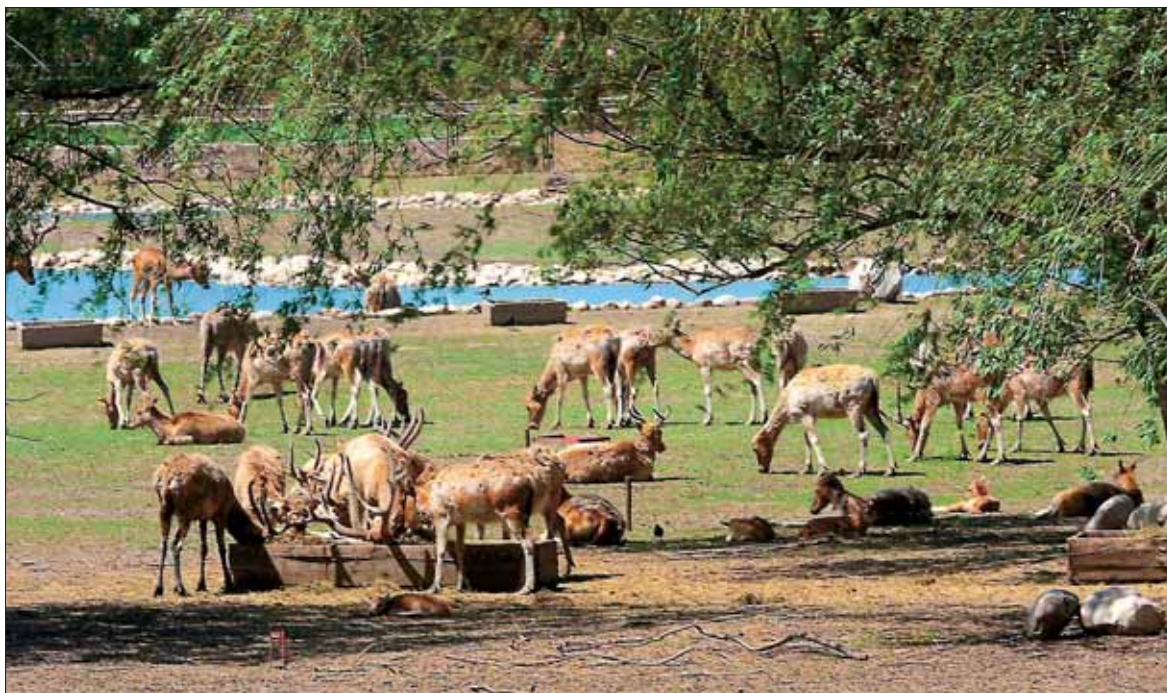
1. Supermarkets sell all the meat you could want to grill: mutton, ground beef, chicken wings and breasts, fish fillets. Also available are various salted meats. Don't forget your vegetables and non-meat foods such as eggplants, mushroom, peppers and corn on the cob. Spices like cumin, pepper and salt are good to bring, and honey and barbecue sauce add flavor to any grilled meat.

2. Choose a place that is flat and sheltered from the wind. Stay away from shrubby areas and dry grass, which are fire hazards.

3. Add oil after the meat has been on the grill a while; you don't want oil dripping into a charcoal fire.

4. Prepare a garbage bag to collect your trash. Remember to keep the place clean!

Continued on page 21...



Nanhaizi Country Park features a Reindeer Garden with more than 100 reindeer.

CFP Photos

...continued from page 20

Nanhaizi Country Park

Located in Daxing District, Nanhaizi is a newly built wetland park that began receiving visitors just last year. Only about a fifth of the park is currently open. The entire park – about four times the size of the Summer Palace – will be open within three years.

Nanhaizi is the largest wetland in Beijing, and also the royal hunting ground of five dynasties from Liao (907-1125) to Qing (1644-1912).

The central area of park is Reindeer Garden, where more than 100 reindeer live. One can also find the yellow muntjac – a type of deer – here. There are also more than 100 different species of birds, such as the red-crowned crane.

Wild ducks can be seen in the park's clear waters. People can pick out one of many spots near the lake to get good views of migrating birds.

Apricot and peach trees are blooming now, and many visitors can be seen photographing the blossoms.

Getting there: Drive along Third Ring Road, pass Fenzhongsi Bridge and get on Beijing-Tianjin-Tangshan Expressway. If driving to Dayangfang Bridge, get to South Fifth Ring Road and exit from Yizhuang. Drive down Xihuan Bei Lu to Sanhaizi Dong Lu.

Or take fast bus 1 to Demao-

zhuang and transfer to bus 453 to Jiangchangcun.

Admission to both Nanhaizi Country Park and Reindeer Garden is free.

Other free country parks good for barbecuing**Guta Park**

Guta, or Ancient Pagoda, is located in southeast Chaoyang District. It is named after an old pagoda built in 1538 during the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644).



Guta Park Photos by Mockingbird

The park has more than 200 species of shrubs and flowers and a large lake in the center. Many crabapples will bloom in late April and May at Crabapple Square.

Getting there: Drive along Beijing-Shenyang Expressway and take Huagongchang exit, then drive to Wangsiying Qiao and turn left. Drive north for another 10 minutes.

Or take bus 363 or 753 to

Wangsiying and walk 10 minutes to the north.

Beijing Pear Garden

This pear garden was once a big orchard and nursery that opened to the public in 2008. A sea of pear blossoms is expected to open in late April.

Since Liyuan, or pear garden, is also the name of theatrical troupes in ancient China, stages are built around the garden for traditional Chinese operas. Visitors can enjoy Beijing opera over dinner.

Getting there: Drive along Yaojiayuan Lu to East Fifth Ring Road; the garden is southeast of Yaojiayuan Bridge.

Or take bus 350, 406, 412, 433, 502, 640, 686, 705, 729 or 989 to Pingfangdongkou and walk 500 meters to the south.

Eucommia Park

Also called Duzhong, this park is located on the extended line of Chang'an Avenue. It was once a forest of gutta percha trees that were planted in 2001. The park opened in 2008, and today features about 30,000 gutta percha trees and shrubs such as ginkgo and honeysuckle. Peonies and China roses can also be found here.

Getting there: Drive along Beijing-Tongzhou Expressway and take the Shuangqiao exit, then drive south to the park.

Or take bus 111, 411 or 475 to Hejiafen.



Hotel

Shangri-La creates escapes for passionate travelers

Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts is launching Shangri-La Escapes, a collection of packages at select hotels and resorts throughout the world. Designed for passionate travelers, Shangri-La Escapes are crafted to please the shopaholic, the gourmand, the spa junkie, the nature lover and the culture vulture. Packages include VIP services at Shangri-La restaurants, spas and nature reserves, as well as special touring opportunities that unlock exclusive access to a destination.

Travelers can explore nature on a private island in Maldives, in the jungles of Borneo, off the coast of Cebu or with the pandas of Sichuan. Adventures of the palette await at Hong Kong, Beijing and Guangzhou, some of the world's most celebrated culinary cities. Amateur historians can marvel at the sites of Chiang Mai and Guilin. Fashionistas and the design cognoscenti can hunt for treasures and bargains in Bangkok and Shanghai. Those looking for a relaxing spa retreat can embark upon CHI journeys in Borneo and Penang.

Shangri-La in Maldives offers a free night for summer

This summer, Shangri-La's Villingili Resort and Spa, Maldives is offering a tempting free bonus night. The extra day, valid between May 9 and October 31, will include a complimentary hotel transfer and breakfast. The Summer Getaway offer is available in seven accommodation styles — including ocean retreats and tropical tree house villas — giving guests the opportunity to customize their stay.

The Summer Getaway starts at \$860 per villa per night for a Pool Villa and includes a complimentary night when paying for three nights, return domestic flights from Malé to Gan for two and a buffet breakfast in Javvu Restaurant for two.

Set amidst lush vegetation on a 3-kilometer-long private island, the spacious resort gives guests the space to indulge. Adventurers can explore the resort and the neighboring local islands by bicycle and spa lovers can recharge with a wellness package or indigenous ritual at CHI, The Spa. Ocean enthusiasts can dive, snorkel, windsurf and parasail. Honeymooners eager to create lifelong memories can venture out to sea aboard a luxurious yacht at sunset or renew their vows with a blessing ceremony on the beach.

Rent

New apartments for rent

New apartments are open for rent in Gemdale City Crown (Jindingmijing) on Liyuanli Bei Jie by Sihui Bridge.

Monthly Rent: 8,000 yuan

Address: Liyuanli Bei Jie, Chaoyang District, Beijing 100022

Bedrooms: 2

Bathrooms: 2

Size: 116 square meters

Laundry: Yes

Cooking: Gas

Parking: Yes

Building Type: Apartment

Deposit Required: One month's rent

Furnishings: LCD television, storage room, heating

Appliances: Refrigerator, garbage disposal, oven, washing machine, air conditioner

Contact: Ines Mula

Tel: 13911123239

Email: ines.mula@gmail.com

Dining



Swirls of delight at Scene a Café

Looking for some slurpy goodness? Don't fret, we've got just the thing! From Beijing noodles to delicious Singaporean Laksa and wok creations, you are sure to fall for these Swirls of Delight.

Where: Scene a Cafe, China World Hotel, Beijing, 1 Jianguomen Wai Dajie, Chaoyang District

When: April 11-24

Tel: 6505 2266 ext. 35



Hopfenstube, German brunch on Easter Sunday

Spend this Easter at Hopfenstube with your family and friends. Brunch is 288 yuan per person and children under 12 eat free.

Brunch includes free house beer and soft drinks, Easter ham and a Brazilian barbecue. Young diners can enjoy the free kids' buffet and kids' corner.

Where: Crowne Plaza Beijing Chaoyang U-Town, 3 Sanfeng Bei Li, Chaoyang District

Tel: 5909 6683 for reservations



Easter Sunday Brunch

Our traditional Easter Egg Hunt on April 24 is sure to entertain children of all ages. The brunch is priced 328 yuan per person and includes fresh juice and soft drinks, 367 yuan with French rose wine and international beer or 428 yuan with champagne.

Where: Sofitel Wanda Beijing, Tower C, Wanda Plaza, 93 Jianguo Lu, Chaoyang District

When: April 24

Tel: 8599 6666 ext. 6521

Email: vic@sofitelwandabj.com



Thai festival

From April 9 to 17, Sofitel Wanda Beijing will be hosting two renowned guest chefs from Sofitel Bangkok Silom. Lunch buffets will be 228 yuan and dinner buffets 288 yuan.

Where: Sofitel Wanda Beijing, Tower C, Wanda Plaza, 93 Jianguo Lu, Chaoyang District

When: April 9-17
Tel: 8599 6666 ext. 6521
Email: vic@sofitelwandabj.com



Summer Palace shoots for supremacy

The king of all spring foods is now at the Summer Palace! Don't miss out on 12 amazing dishes made from bamboo shoots.

Where: Summer Palace, China World Hotel, Beijing, 1 Jianguomen Wai Dajie, Chaoyang District

When: April 1-30

Tel: 6505 2266 ext. 34

A week for thanking secretaries

It's time to let the assistants we depend on know how much we appreciate their hard work. Brighten up their Year of the Rabbit with this gesture of thanks.

Participate in a raffle and cocktail party at 7 pm on April 29. Be sure to do is drop your name card at the secretary week lunch for access to the fun activities.

Where: Westin Beijing Financial Street, 9B Financial Street, Xicheng District

When: April 25-29

Cost: Senses Lunch Buffet, 268 yuan per person for secretaries; 416 yuan (15 percent gratuity) for boss and secretary pairs. Limit of 10 packages per lunch. Prego: three-course Italian set: 208 yuan (15 percent gratuity); Jewel: six-course Chinese set: 208 yuan (15 percent gratuity).

Tel: 6606 8866 ext. 7810 for Senses, 7815 for Prego or 7820 for Jewel.

(By Jackie Zhang)

Chinglish story

This column focuses on Chinglish mistakes in our daily life. If you have any experiences to share, send them to Li Zhixin at lizhixin@ynet.com.

Take it with a grain of salt

By He Jianwei

The crisis at Japan's Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant has escalated every day since it was severely damaged by the earthquake and tsunami on March 11. Radioactive iodine and cesium have already spread to neighboring countries.

But the crisis is also marked with

misleading information and misconceptions. One week after the disaster, many Chinese shoppers rushed to supermarkets to buy iodized salt in the mistaken belief it can offset radiation exposure.

While the salt panic has died down in China, South Korean residents began stocking up on salt last week. It is said that this year's new supply has already

sold out, even though the price of salt is surging in supermarkets.

In other countries, people are buying iodine supplements with the belief they protect the body from radioactive iodine.

Experts have repeatedly said it is unreasonable to hoard salt or iodine supplements.

The discussion on microblogs has shifted to people asking how a rumor could spread so fast and why so many people believe it.

"It's a kind of herd instinct — everyone does what everyone else seems to be doing," one user posted. "If there is no accurate and credible information, people will believe what they've heard. Even though there is authorized information, everyone must take it with a grain of salt."

I agree with the latter, but I was confused about the last sentence. Does that mean if the information is announced by officials, then people should buy salt? It sounded a little contradictory.

Then I consulted a dictionary. To take a statement "with a grain of salt" means to accept it but to maintain a degree of skepticism about its truth. The phrase can also be: "take it with a pinch of salt."

It turns out there is a relationship between the salt and the truth. The phrase originally came from the fact that food is more easily eaten when taken with a small amount of salt.

The Roman historian Pliny the Elder wrote in *Natural History*, an encyclopedia published around AD 77, "After the defeat of that mighty monarch, Mithridates, Gnaeus Pompeius found in his private cabinet a recipe for an antidote in his own handwriting; it was to the following effect: Take two dried walnuts, two figs, and 20 leaves of rue; pound them all together, with the addition of a grain of salt; if a person takes this mixture fasting, he will be proof against all poisons for that day."

Since the 17th century, the phrase has been used as a figure of speech, signaling that truth requires moderation by the notional pinch of salt.



Chinglish on the way

This column aims to identify Chinglish in public areas. If you see any Chinglish signs, please send a picture of it to lizhixin@ynet.com together with your name and address.

Green Life! Show Mercy!

By Terry Boyd-Zhang

Call me crazy, but I've always felt there is an energy budding from the earth. This energy is stifled when it is covered with parking lots and sidewalks, and I think that if we cement over Mother Nature too much, she will retaliate. Like a built-in survival reflex.

In Canada, I make a point of walking on the earth whenever possible. This is not so doable in Beijing because signs such as this one are everywhere there is grass.

Needless to say, the places with grass are already few and far between and, should you try to step on those few spindly, dust-laden leaves, a grandma with a red armband will jump out from



nowhere and beat you. Or at least yell at you until the message "Don't walk on the grass" is firmly embedded into your subconscious. Watch out for the Grandmas — you'll be afraid to walk on the grass even in your dreams!

There is a four-character expression

in Chinese, *shouxia liuqing*, which means something like "to hold out one's hand and show mercy." The sign in the photo is a quaint take on that, a flowery rhyme which just doesn't translate well. In fact, you will find signs of this sort all over Olympic Green.

The first two characters (*liuse*) mean "green," and the next two (*shengming*) mean "life." On the second line, the first character (*zu*) is "foot," and the next one (*xia*) is "under," and the last two (*liuqing*) are "show mercy, leniency." So: Green life underfoot, show mercy. Close enough.

Besides, if you don't show mercy and the grandmas don't catch you, Earth knows where you live ...

Blacklist

This is a column of words or phrases commonly misused by Chinese speakers. If you're planning to be an English teacher, reporter or employee of a multinational company, then watch out for this page each week

1. The value of the Bai's works has remained above that of the works by Xu Beihong.

Professor Zhu Shida (ZS): The definite article before Bai is not properly used. We usually don't use a definite article before the possessive case of a proper noun. We usually say: "Bai's works," just as we say China's enterprises, America's efforts, Japan's total output. It would be very awkward to say the China's enterprises, the America's efforts, the Japan's total output. When you say "the Bai's works," that means the entire output of the painter in his life. So, it would be better for us to say, The value of Bai's works has remained above that of the works by Xu Beihong.

Terry Boyd-Zhang (TBZ): Using "the" is almost as difficult as using "le" in Chinese. There are some rules you can learn but all rules in English have a hundred exceptions.

2. But although the new stocks are growing vigorously, there will be cumulative risks behind the soaring price.

ZS: We never use "but" and "although" at the same time. It is lexicologically impermissible. The sentence should be: Although the new stocks are growing vigorously, there will be cumulative risks behind the soaring price. Sometimes, we also see the beginners use "however" and "although" at the same time, which isn't good either. For instance, we have a sentence like this: However, although he is not capable of finishing the job, he still brags about his capacity. We should simply omit the word "however." It is redundant here just as in the sample sentence.

TBZ: I see "but" being overused in my students' writing. Try to use some other words instead (for example: although, however, nevertheless, nonetheless, as a result). But as the Professor has said, don't use both at the same time!

3. To protect the investor's rights, China has stipulated a series of laws.

ZS: Obviously China's laws aren't a concern for only a single investor. Instead, laws apply to all investors. In this case, how can you say "to protect the investor's rights" with "investor" in the singular form? Beginners to English are very likely to make this mistake. We have to be aware all the time of the numbers of the noun. The correct way of saying this should be: To protect the investors' rights, China has stipulated a series of laws.

TBZ: But be careful overusing the possessive as well — inanimate objects should not take the possessive! Compare: the book's pages (a book is an inanimate object and cannot actually "possess" anything — better to say: the pages of the book.)

4. Some participated social networking companies have pointed out that this has become a new trend.

ZS: To participate is an intransitive verb. If you wish to use it as an attributive, you will have to use its participle form instead of the passive voice form. It is wrong to use the passive voice form of the verb to participate. The right way to say it should be: Some participating social networking companies have pointed out that this has become a new trend. When we talk about the membership of the G20, we will say "the 20 participating nations," not "the 20 participated nations."

TBZ: Possibly you could switch it around: The social networking companies which participated in the ... Or: Twenty of the nations that were participating in the meeting ...

The Green Hornet (2011)

Movie of the week

Chinese music fans who love Hollywood movies have extra reason to celebrate the latest version of *The Green Hornet*: Kato is played by none other than Taiwanese singer Jay Chou.

The role, which has Chou filling the shoes of the late Bruce Lee, has the 33-year-old star winning fans on the other side of the Pacific. But the film is enjoyable for more than Chou's performance: the movie was given a fun treatment by the cast, and the visual effects are fantastic.

Synopsis

Britt Reid, son of Los Angeles' most prominent media magnate who died mysteriously, inherits his father's vast empire. Striking an unlikely friendship with one of his father's more inventive employees, Kato, Britt sees a chance to do something meaningful in his life: fight crime.

To get close to the criminals, Britt and Kato pose as criminals themselves. Britt becomes the vigilante, the Green Hornet, and Kato builds the ultimate in crime-fighting equipment.



Scene 1

(People gather for James Reid's funeral.)

Guest A: It was during my election campaign for district attorney that I first met James Reid. And it was immediately clear to me that he was a man of infallible integrity. He dedicated himself to this city through his philanthropic endeavors and his newspaper, The Daily Sentinel, a shining beacon of truth. He was our North Star. He showed us the way. Thank you, James.

Guest B: Britt, your father was truly a great man. When I first started campaigning he gave me some ...

Britt Reid (R): Yes, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Guest C: He was the best businessman I've ever known. He always came out on top. Britt, hey, I'm so sorry for your loss. I just want to say that, my father was a federal court judge. So I think I know how it feels. When he passed away, I had some pretty big shoes to fill (1). Just like you. So if you ever need somebody to talk to. I mean, if you ever just want to grab a drink, want to get cheered up. I'm around (2).

R: OK, thanks man. I really appreciate it.

Scene 2

(Britt meets Kato and asks him to make coffee.)

R: You're Kato? I thought your name was Henry. I thought the pool guy was Kato.

Kato (K): I'm Kato. I'm sorry to hear about your father. He was a complex man.

R: Yeah. I've two questions for you, Kato. Then you can go home. Why is it that my dad's mechanic makes the coffee? And why is it that without you, the coffee tastes like crap?

K: I think it's easier if I show you. *(Kato shows the coffee machine.)*

R: Holy cow. Where did you get that thing?

K: I made it. Watch this.

R: You made that ...? Sit with me (3). Kato. Tell me your tale. **K:** I was born in Shanghai. You know, Shanghai?

R: Love Japan.

K: My parents died when I was 4, and until I was 12 I lived in an orphanage.

R: I'm sorry, my mom died when I was young, too. What



happened after that?

K: Then me and a few friends ran away. Lived on the street.

R: How'd you start working for my dad?

K: I work in a garage. And one day your father came in with a '65 Chrysler. I know the car well. He was so happy with my work. Then he offered me a job. I said yes.

R: The coffee, how did that come about?

K: He used to always say, "No one could ever make me, a good cup of coffee."

R: Good impression.

K: So I built him the coffee

machine.

R: Well you make one damn fine cup of coffee, sir.

(Kato shows Britt some of his drawings, after which James changes the subject.)

R: Hey Kato, what did you think of my father?

K: He was fine.

R: Come on, just tell me.

K: He was my boss. Nobody loves their boss.

R: Don't sugarcoat (4) this, Kato. You're not going to offend me. Just tell me, man to man.

K: He was a bit of a dick.

R: Yeah.

Scene 3

(Britt and Kato are involved in a fight against criminals.)

R: Oh, God! That was crazy! I can't believe that! Holy shit! Oh my God, Kato.

(Police begin following them.)

K: S---t. Pigs.

R: Oh no. Oh no. Are you a good driver?

K: You kidding me? When I was a kid, me and some friends ...

R: Kato, not now, just drive.

K: OK, OK. Just act cool.

R: What do I do?

K: Just act casual.

Police: Pull it over, now!

R: What are you doing?

K: I'm trying to lose him.

R: Man, now we're in a car chase! Here he comes.

K: Show me your hands! **R:** He's trying to kill us! Do the Ben-Hur s---t.

(Britt and Kato manage to escape.)

R: Kato, I think this is the greatest moment of my entire life.

K: I know. Mine too.

R: Yeah, we rule! That was crazy. How do you do that, dude? You beat the crap out of those guys!

K: Where I grew up, it was very dangerous. I got in a lot of fights when I was a kid.

R: But you knew where people were without looking. You were so fast.

K: When my heart starts pumping, it's almost like time slows down.

R: It's unbelievable, how cool we are. Do you hear me, Dad? We did it!

Vocabulary

1. have big shoes to fill: to fill in for someone who did an essential or challenging job

2. to be around: to be available for help

3. sit with someone: Britt's way of asking Kato to stay

4. sugarcoat: to soften one's meaning

(By Huang Daohen)